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THE CAREER OF SOLANO, CHIEF OF THE SUISUNS

By Marcus Peterson

MA Thesis, U. C. B.

CAREER OF SOLANO

- Peterson

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The Career of Solano, Chief of the Suisuns

By

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THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

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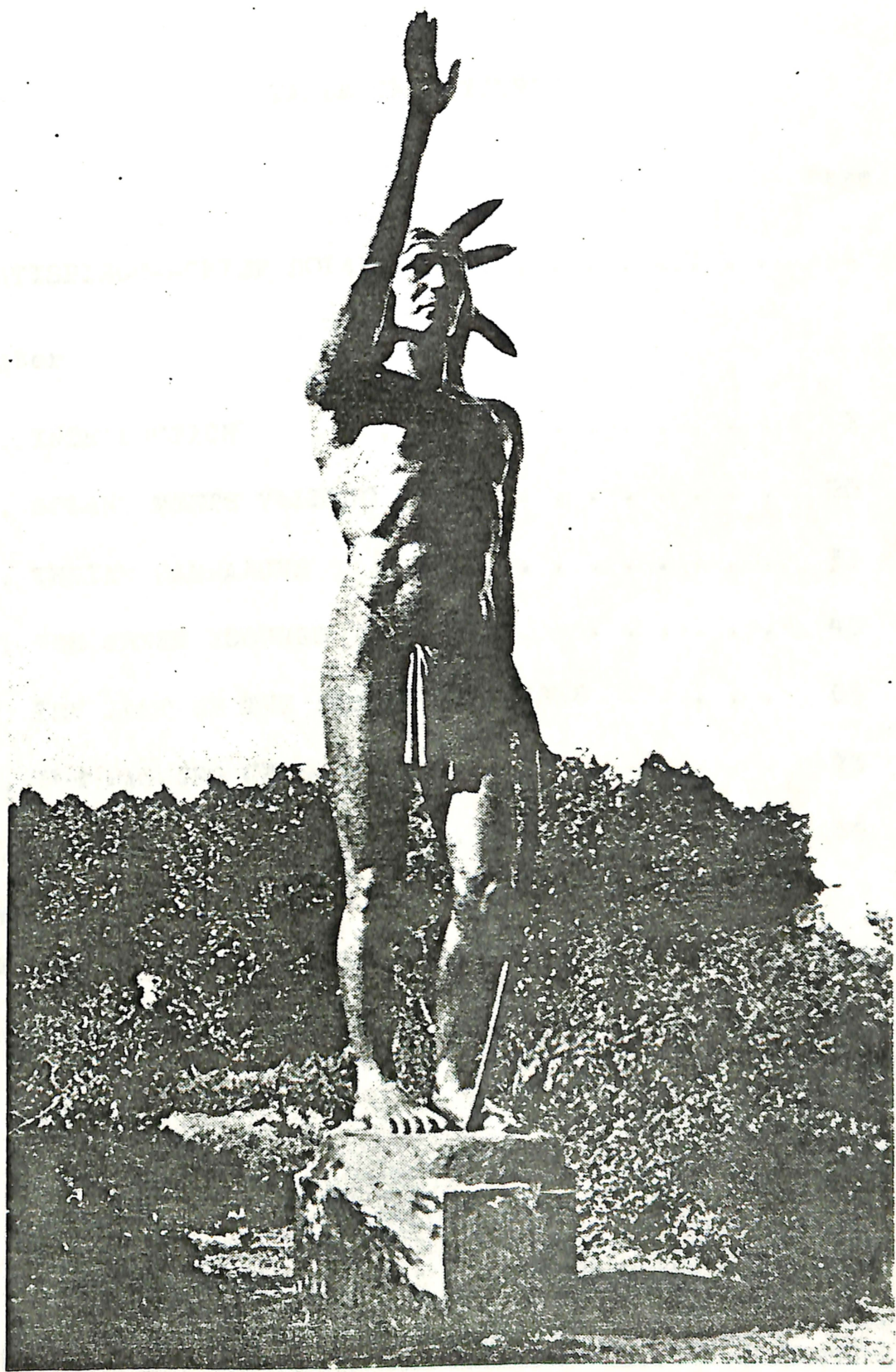
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THE CAREER OF SOLANO
CHIEF OF THE SUISUNS

by

Marcus E. Peterson

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

I

Chief Solano lived in northern California in the first half of the nineteenth century. His story is a remarkable one because of his unusual physical and mental attributes. His importance lies in his liaison with General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, who, more than any other man, was responsible for the Spanish occupation of the country north of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.¹ Solano was powerful enough to have seriously delayed this occupation, although not so powerful as to have prevented it. It is more remarkable that he should have elected to aid and cooperate with Vallejo in the infiltration of his domain. The peaceful mixing of the two races stands as a monument to the wisdom and foresight of Chief Solano. Where miscegenation failed, patience and tolerance permitted the white men to come in and assume their dominant role. It is a sad commentary, however, that although the natives did not die in a heroic last stand, they did perish rather ingloriously under the vices and diseases of the white men.

The story of Chief Solano is buried in legend, supported by fact, and obscured by controversy. One of the important sources of information about Solano is the records of General Vallejo, close friend and ally. These records vary in reliability according to the General's sense of exaggeration and self-importance, but the validity of the information can usually be verified by comparison with other records, traditional and anthropological. Yet one of the major problems encountered in a study of Solano is the diversity of information in the recorded accounts. A presentation of the anthropological and historical backgrounds of the Alta California aborigines serves to illustrate this problem.

Solano, who it is believed was born in Sonoma in 1800, grew to manhood in an unstable environment.² He saw the Spanish penetrations into his domain superseded by the Mexican, and finally the American. It is to his credit that he was able briefly to adjust himself to these changing conditions and permit his people to live in the same area.

Solano was a magnificent figure of a man, six feet seven inches in height and large in proportion.³ Although the California Indians generally were squat and ill-formed, those north of San Francisco Bay, particularly the Suisuns, were superior to those to the south.⁴ These were stupid and brutish and can hardly be described as divided into distinct tribes. Those living in the mountain regions were a little less cowardly than those dwelling on the ocean shore and large river bottoms. All were what the American called "Dig-

gers" despite the fact that the term was not technically correct. They did not cultivate the soil, but lived on what they could dig out or gather on top of the ground. They ate anything and everything within easy reach that would support life, including carrion, clover, grasshoppers, grubworms, hawks, skunks, yellow-jacket larvae and salmon flies.⁵

The typical Californian Indian may be described as follows: medium-statured, high-faced, broad-headed, narrow-nosed. The hair was usually cut or burned off in a straight line across the forehead about on a level with the eyebrows, but was allowed to grow a few inches longer at the sides and behind. It looked like a black thatch more or less matted and without gloss.⁶ All were uniformly pale brown in complexion. However, with constant exposure to the sun they became dark brown in color, matching some of the paler Negroes in this respect.⁷

II

Turning from the Indians of Alta California as a whole to the Penutian empire, it has been established that this empire composed a union of five stocks--Wintun, Maidu, Miwok, Costanoan and Yokut. The Penutian empire occupied nearly half of California. It also held the core of the state which is the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, together with the flanking and enclosing mountains--an unbroken plain four hundred miles long and a stretch from crest to crest of nearly five hundred.⁸

The Wintuns were once strong in numbers and powerful in war.⁹ The first writer to use Wintun as the designation of a linguistic group was Stephen Powers, who wrote about them in the Overland Monthly. Situated on the west side of the middle and lower Sacramento, the Wintuns composed one of the largest nations of the state.¹⁰ The numerous Wintun bands possessed a stretch of country about two hundred and thirty miles long, from the shores of the San Pablo and Suisun Bays in the south to Shasta Retreat, near the headwaters of the Sacramento River, and the sources of the McCloud River at the base of Mount Shasta, in the north.

It has been customary to divide the Wintun into three main groups: the Southern Wintun or Patwin, the Central Wintun, and the Northern Wintun. The Southern Wintun, or Patwin, in particular deserve a distinctive name, since they are well marked off culturally from the Central and Northern Wintun. Ethnological data on the Patwin are unsatisfactory. By 1932 the southern half of the Patwin group had become wholly extinct, necessitating that cultural references be made from the Wintun in general.¹¹

Arnold Pilling has divided the Southern Wintun or Patwin into three subdivisions: the Hill Patwin, the River Patwin, and the Southern Patwin.¹² Both the Suisun and Yolo were tribes of the Southern Patwin.¹³ The Suisun tribe consisted of approximately one hundred twenty-five Indians who inhabited the southern swamp area along the north shore of Suisun Bay.¹⁴

Solano held sway over a triangle-shaped area which contained four villages and approximately five hundred fifty Indians. Isidora Solano was one of Solano's many wives and she has asserted that he was prince of the Suisuns, Topaytos, Yolotoys, and Chuructos. The Suisuns had their headquarters at Yulyul; the Topaytos were situated in Monticello Valley; the Yolotoys were up in Yolo County; and the Chuructos were at Churucto on Cache Creek.

The political units of the Patwin were small. They frequently lived in several settlements, and each settlement had a headman who was called chief. Each of these groups seemed to possess a small territory usually definable in terms of drainage. Men went around completely naked. Women wore a skirt or apron of flat tule. There might be several chiefs in a town, but only one was head. Chiefs did not fight in the wars nor were they attacked. In formal battle chiefs stood behind or at the side of the line. The war leader was a brave man who could shoot straight and dodge well. He was called yeto. Solano's Indian name was Sem-Yeto. Perhaps this is the origin of part of his name.

Many writers have used Sem-Yeto and phonetic variations of the same. The San Francisco Sunday Chronicle has used Sam Yeto in one instance.¹⁵ Mary Jean Davis of Berkeley has used Sem-Yeto, meaning "The Brave One."¹⁶ Aubrey Drury refers to Solano as Sem Yoto.¹⁷ Harry D. Hubbard prefers to use Sum-yet-ho.¹⁸ Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez also uses this variation and interprets it to mean "Mighty Arm" and also "Fierce One of The Brave Hand." Still another variation of Sem-Yeto

is the one used by Eileen Minahan of Fairfield--Sem-yet-ho.¹⁹ Rodney Martin Rulofson²⁰ of Cordelia maintains that all of these variations are correct, since the irregularities in spelling are due merely to the individual's interpretation of a phonetic pronunciation.²¹

III

Spanish expeditions penetrated the north bay and Suisun country even before Solano was born. The Gaspar de Portola expedition discovered San Francisco Bay in 1769. Pedro Fages attempted to go round the bay the next year, but turned back from the site of Oakland or Berkeley. Two years later Fages and Father Juan Crespi made another attempt and reached the head of Suisun Bay. Perhaps this was the first encounter of the Spanish with the Suisun Indians.

In May, 1810, the Gabriel Moraga campaign got up into Suisun country.²² Moraga's campaign was a punitive expedition. The Suisuns had been killing mission Indians and running off the cattle. Since the two missions closest to Suisun country at this time were San Jose and San Francisco, it is to be inferred that the mission Indians herded cattle all over the country which today comprises Contra Costa County. The Suisuns, too, foraged or raided far south of their main encampment at Yulyul in order to encounter these San Jose and San Francisco Indians. Moraga was sent by Governor Arrillaga with a detachment of seventeen men to punish the Suisuns. Crossing Carquinez Strait, he ran into one hundred and twenty Indians, capturing eighteen. These were immediately freed

because they were badly wounded, and there was no way of transporting them to San Francisco. It was believed that none of them would live anyhow. The rest took refuge in three huts. All in two of the huts were killed, and those in the third burned to death rather than surrender when the hut was set on fire. For this inglorious action, which was regarded as a most brilliant affair at the time, Moraga was promoted to a brevet-lieutenancy.²³

Again in October, 1811, a small exploring expedition penetrated the Suisuns' hunting grounds. Sergeant Jose Antonio Sanchez was in command of this October detachment, which proceeded by way of Angel Island, Point San Pablo and Point San Pedro, probably discovering Petaluma Creek in San Pablo Bay. Passing Mare Island, they entered Suisun Bay and ascended the west branch of the San Joaquin. Returning to the mouth of the San Joaquin, they went a little way up the Sacramento. Passing through Nurse Slough and Montezuma Creek, they came out about a league east of Suisun, and then ascended Suisun Creek as far as Vacaville. Then they returned to San Francisco.

In 1817, Jose Dario Arguello, commandante at the Presidio of San Francisco, dispatched Lieutenant Jose Sanchez with a small detachment to explore very carefully the country north of Carquinez Strait, and incidentally to subjugate the Suisun Indians who roamed in the vicinity of the present-day towns of Suisun, Fairfield, Rockville and Benicia.²⁴ Sanchez and his men arrived at a place near where Martinez lies today. In order to cross the Carquinez Strait to a point where

Benicia now lies, they built rafts of bundles of tules and floated across. There is a very marked current through the strait, and the passage was difficult, particularly for the horses. Since they could not be loaded on the rafts, they had to be swum across with their bridles tied up closely to the sterns of the rafts. Several Suisuns saw this strange armada in the early dawn and, quickly summoning more braves, were waiting on the northern shore to meet them. The exact place where the battle started is not known, but it is believed to have been in the low-lying hills behind Benicia. A Suisun let fly with a poisoned arrow and the battle was on.²⁵

Sanchez was able to get his men and horses up on the shore and drawn up in battle formation. When Chief Molica could no longer contain the soldiers, he began to skirmish to cover his retreat towards Yulyul, the main Suisun encampment. He thought that by drawing the Spanish into the interior, he could surround them and destroy them. At Yulyul there was a concentration of the greater part of his tribe and the best warriors and leaders. He succeeded in his plan, but the soldiers were all men inured to warfare, accustomed to perils and this type of fighting. Sanchez left part of his force as a rear guard under the command of Sergeant Francisco Soto to bring up the horses and saddles of the troops. Fortunately he was able to do so successfully, rejoining his companions in time to be of great service to them. Now they could go into action, part of them mounted and part on foot. The battle began at one in the afternoon. At nightfall operations were suspended, and in order not to jeopardize the outcome of

the expedition a retreat was ordered to the place where the tule rafts had been left. At dawn of the following day, the force was attacked by Molica who, at the head of six hundred warriors, tried to force the white men to cross back over the Carquinez Strait. This unexpected attack forced the advance guard to withdraw, but as a measure of precaution they retreated in order to the main body of the troops. When the troops received the Indian warriors with rapid volleys of shots, the latter, frightened by the large number of warriors who were killed at the first volley, began a hasty flight.²⁶ They did not stop until they reached Yulyul, where they made what preparations they could to defend themselves.²⁷

The charge by Sanchez's cavalymen contributed considerably to Molica's defeat, for they inflicted great damage with their heavy sabers. The Indians finally gave in after a most hard fought battle. The Spanish won because of the superiority of their arms and the speed of their horses. Sanchez believed that Molica's warriors equaled his own in courage. Although the Suisuns had lost the battle in the open field,²⁸ they were able to fortify themselves at Yulyul. Sanchez sent in interpreters to persuade them to make a treaty with him. When Molica refused, Sanchez laid siege to their improvised fort, expecting to starve them out. In the course of three days the Indians made several sallies out of their fort, but were defeated each time. When Molica saw finally that his cause was lost, he assembled his unfortunate subjects. He gave the order to set fire to all the tule houses which were full of women and children. They burned alive

rather than surrender to their captors, although the troops made efforts to save some of the families from death. They did not want to be saved, but on the contrary, voluntarily threw themselves into the flames. Thus perished almost the entire rancheria of Molica and the Suisun Indians.²⁹ Sem-Yeto was absent during this tragic occurrence. It is believed that he was away on a hunting expedition. On his return to camp he found only the smouldering ruins of the tule houses and the charred remains of his people.

In the ensuing years Indians from the neighboring tribes joined with Sem-Yeto and the remaining Suisuns. This growing band chose him to be their new chief for he was great of stature and brave in war.³⁰ The Suisuns had represented the eastern wing of the Sonoma tribe scattered through what has since become Napa, Sonoma, Lake and Solano counties. It was all of these remaining Sonoma Indians that eventually came under Sem-Yeto's command. Fearless though he was known to be, the young chief recognized the futility of further bloodshed, seeing that his people were no match for Spanish guns and armor.³¹ He decided that to save his people from utter destruction he must avoid conflict at all costs; he must compromise with these powerfully armed white men and live with them peacefully side by side.

Meanwhile the Spanish were not idle. On December 14, 1817, an establishment was made at San Rafael which purported to be a mission, or at least a branch of San Francisco. The site was probably recommended by Gabriel Moraga, who had passed that way several times since 1810. Father Luis Gil

was appointed to take charge, and went there accompanied by several other friars. San Rafael was thought to be a healthful place, and also an indication to the Russians at Fort Ross that they, the Spanish, meant to penetrate this northern country.

In May, 1819, Father Payeras and others passed through San Rafael in an investigation for another mission site. Climbing the highest hill behind Point San Pedro, they looked out on the Petaluma plain. Among other suggestions, Payeras mentioned the possibility of establishing missions at Petaluma and Suisun. Perhaps these remarks were the forerunners for the creation of the San Francisco de Solano Mission at Sonoma, four years later.

In 1821 rumors were current to the effect that a party of Englishmen or Americans had established themselves within forty or fifty leagues to the north of San Francisco. Spurred by the possibility of foreign danger, Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola decided upon an expedition to get information. Luis Arguello, famous as an explorer with a record second only to that of Gabriel Moraga, was chosen to take command. Leaving San Francisco on October 18, 1821, Arguello and his men crossed Carquinez Strait, and headed north through Suisun country, apparently without encountering any serious opposition. Crossing Solano and Yolo counties, they came to the Sacramento River at a point above Grimes in Colusa County. They proceeded into Glenn, Tehama and Trinity counties before turning south for Mendocino County and San Rafael. They reached San Francisco on November 15, 1821. Although

there had been some minor skirmishes along the way, most of the natives had not been hostile.

Expeditions into the interior did not end with the change of flag in 1822 from Spanish to Mexican. They were of less importance than formerly, being largely for the purpose of recovering stolen animals and punishing the Indians for their depredations.

The last link in the chain of California's missions was established at Sonoma. Saint Solano was born in Spain in 1549 and educated for the priesthood. Through the Spanish-American islands and over the mainlands he labored among the Indians, winning his title of "Apostle of the Indies." He died in Lima, Peru, June 14, 1610. Though dead, the great missionary's name lived on in the new mission, San Francisco de Solano. Francisco Castro, accompanied by Alferez Jose Sanchez, with nineteen men, and Father Jose Altimira, made the preliminary exploration. They left San Francisco on June 25, 1823, taking a launch to San Rafael. After ranging the plain from Petaluma to Sonoma, Napa and Suisun, they finally settled on Sonoma. On July 4 a cross was set up at Sonoma, after which they began their return to San Francisco. On August 25, Father Altimira was back at Sonoma, and its activity as a mission started. Apparently Sem-Yeto knew about the activities of the padres at Sonoma, for it has been said that he was present at the founding of the mission, that he even helped lay it out. The wise padres flattered the barbarous and powerful Sem-Yeto, and in time converted him to the Catholic faith. At his baptism he was given the name of

the missionary Francisco de Solano.³²

The following information occurs on the fifth and sixth double pages of a Bancroft Library manuscript:

Francisco Solano. A man called by the Indians Quelloy, given the name Francisco Solano. Baptism number 46 April 17, 1824.

Francisco Solano, cousin of a man of 40 years of age called by the natives Vallimele, was given the name Francisco Solano. Baptism number 27 April 16, 1824.³³

Of the two preceding baptisms, the latter refers to Sem-Yeto, and the former to his brother. Sem-Yeto now became Chief Solano and was henceforward referred to as such. His brother was also baptised Solano. To differentiate between the two, Chief Solano or Sem-Yeto was always referred to as Solano, or Solano I, and his brother as Solano II.³⁴

So the name Solano (meaning east wind in Spanish) was placed on a Suisun (meaning west wind in Wintun). But the name Solano was an illustrious one in the annals of church history, and one not lightly given. It could hardly have been given to an Indian less than Sem-Yeto, an exceptionally intelligent Indian who held chieftaincy over almost all of the rancherias between Petaluma Creek and the Sacramento River. Father Altimira was not only a good preacher, but something of a politician as well when he gave Sem-Yeto the name of the saint of the Sonoma church. The new convert accepted the title, also the new faith, and prevented his people from making ashes of the new mission. Solano, profiting by the experience of Chief Molica, decided that the only way

to save himself and his people from destruction was to get along with the white man. He even embraced the white man's religion, knowing at the same time about the mission life at San Jose, San Francisco, Monterey, and elsewhere. He knew full well that the Indians were being enslaved and dying off under the Spanish mission system. He knew too that he had to deal with the white man, but at the same time he did not want to bow down to him.³⁵ Solano's own idea of mutual helpfulness and peace for the welfare of his people was supported by Father Altimira. This young padre taught the Indians that their only hope was for them to live in peace with the white man and work together. At the mission, Solano learned to speak Spanish, how to read and write and keep accounts as well as many other skills such as adobe making and building, farming and cattle raising. He persuaded some of his followers to become mission Indians and to accept the peace offered by the white padre. In the process of receiving a fairly good education from the mission fathers, Solano adopted many of the ways of civilization. He thought very highly of the priests for their knowledge and kindness and they too, apparently, considered him to have many fine qualities.³⁶

Although Solano may have profited from his association with the Sonoma mission, and though his association was relatively extended, the same cannot be said for the other Indians. There probably were not more than a score or two whom Solano was able to persuade to come to the mission to live. Furthermore, those who came did not remain very long. This conclusion is drawn from an oration delivered by General

Vallejo at the Centennial Celebration on Sunday, October 8, 1876, of the founding of the Presidio of San Francisco and the Mission Dolores. Among other things he said that the last mission to be founded was the one in Sonoma Valley in 1823, abandoned soon afterward because of the incursions of the Indians and reestablished in 1827, under the supervision of Father Fortuni; but it was not rebuilt permanently until 1830. If Solano did not take active part in the incursions, he at least was passive towards them, or else his name would have shown up as that of an heroic defender of his new faith and church.

Although Solano seemed to have been an amiable aborigine who fell in love with the mission fare and faith, Hubert Howe Bancroft hints that this love of Solano's was not universally shared with his fellow men. He remarks:

"Far be it from me to blame the Indians for their conduct; for there was little in their past training or present treatment by white men to encourage honest industry."³⁷

NOTES

1. Although most references to Vallejo in the English language are as General, Spanish documents refer to him officially as Lieutenant. However, late in the 1830's and early in the 1840's, political and military matters began to change almost as rapidly as Vallejo's titles. Castro has referred to Vallejo as comandante militar, Figueroa as alferez, Alvarado as comandante general. In 1838 Vallejo was promoted to capitán de la compañía presidial, and in 1839 to coronel de defensores de la patria. The latter order was addressed to the Comandante General de la Alta California, so this title was also officially recognized. In 1842 Vallejo was promoted to teniente-coronel de caballería, and in 1846 to coronel activo de caballería permanente. It is easy to understand why the Americans would simply refer to Vallejo as General, when he also acquired the titles jefe de la frontera del norte and Micheltorena's title of jefe de la línea militar.

2. It is also believed that Solano may have been the illegitimate son of a white man, although it is not known if there were white men in this area at or before this time.

3. Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, Spanish and Indian Place Names of California (San Francisco: A. M. Robertson, 1914), p. 268.

4. Myrtle M. McKittrick, Vallejo, Son of California (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1944), p. 60.

5. Edward S. Curtis, The North American Indian (Norwood, Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1924), Vol. 14, p. 83.

6. Theodore H. Hittell, History of California (San Francisco, Pacific Press, 1885. Publishing House and Occidental Publishing Co.), Vol. I, pp. 728-733.

7. E. W. Gifford, California Indian Types. Reprinted from Natural History, Vol. XXVI, No. 1 (New York: 1926), p. 56.

8. Alfred Louis Kroeber, Handbook of the Indians of California (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), pp. 347-349.

9. The San Francisco Call, July 6, 1902 (San Francisco, California).

10. University of California, Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 6, p. 284. Frederic Ward Putnam, Ed. (Berkeley: The University Press, 1908.)

11. Alfred Louis Kroeber, The Patwin and Their Neighbors (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), pp. 253-254.

12. Arnold R. Pilling is a graduate student in archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley, and is rapidly approaching doctoral status. In fact, The Sacramento Bee refers to him as a professor of archaeology, whereas the Vallejo Times-Herald and the San Francisco Chronicle refer to him as a University of California archaeologist.

13. There may have been another subdivision of the Southern Patwin, the Sonomas, in which case the Suisuns represented the eastern wing of the Sonoma tribe.

14. W. Egbert Schenck, Historic Aboriginal Groups of the California Delta Region (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926), p. 136.

15. San Francisco Sunday Chronicle, Oct. 9, 1887 (San Francisco, Calif.)

16. Mary Jean Davis, "Chief Francisco Solano", The California Highway Patrolman, Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 36 (August, 1937).

17. Aubrey Drury, California, An Intimate Guide (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 360.

18. Harry D. Hubbard, Vallejo (Boston: Meador Publishing Co., 1941), p. 148.

19. Eileen Minahan, The Story of Chief Solano of the Suisun Indians (Fairfield, Calif.: Solano County Schools, 1955), p. 4.

20. Rodney Martin Rulofson is a long-time resident of Cordelia, California, and has spent twenty years collecting data on the Indians in general, and on Solano in particular. Rulofson feels that he knows more about Solano than any other man living. Also he has in his personal possession Platon Vallejo's letters and unpublished documents. Mrs. Madie D. Brown, curator of the Vallejo Home State Historical Monument, suggested to the author in her letter of October 30, 1955, ".....that you write to Rulofson because he has done a great deal of research work on the Indians of California." Mr. F. A. Bridewell, Monument Supervisor at the Sonoma Mission State Historical Monument, suggested that we "contact" Rulofson for the "photographic copies of the deeds he quotes as well as other data concerning Chief Solano."

21. Hubert Howe Bancroft has written that Solano's original name was Numa or Tetoy.

22. Sem-Yeto, a boy of about ten, may have become a captive of the expeditionaries. However, this is surmisable as there is no record of what happened to him, and it can only be inferred that he escaped or was released.

23. In writing of this expedition against the Suisuns, Alvarado claims that part of the success of the campaign was due to the capture of Sem-Yeto who was taken by Moraga to San Jose and was baptized there or later at Mission Francisco de Solano. Writing this account many years later, Alvarado places the year as 1817.

24. Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Historia de California, Recuerdos historicos y personales de la Alta California (5 Vols.), 1875. Deposited in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California; manuscript pp. 151-2.

25. The Suisuns were a part of the Wintun Nation and the Wintun presented an aspect of fairly homogeneous culture. This is an Edward S. Curtis observation as well as the statement that the Wintun never made use of poisoned arrows.

26. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 152-3.

27. Yulyul was about five miles west of the present town of Fairfield, the county seat of Solano County. The town of Rockville now covers the old Yulyul site. The Indian word Suisun means "west wind" and it was for the west wind of this section of the country that this tribe was named. They were the people of the west wind. The Indian name Yulyul means "the place of the setting sun." The sharp rise on the west side of Rockville is thought to have been an important crossroads in Alta California and to have served as a meeting place for Indian tribes and white men.

28. This "open field" is a narrow stretch of land extending fifteen miles or so north from Benicia to Yulyul. Bordering the "open field" on the east lie the shores of Suisun Bay. The western border consists of a long, low range of hills.

29. H. H. Robinson--Pres. Mariano G. Vallejo, Informe de la comision especial sobre la derivacion y definicion de los nombres de los diferentes condados del estado de California, etc. (San Jose, Calif., Apr. 15, 1850), p. 13.

30. Davis, "Chief Francisco Solano", Official Program of Unveiling Ceremonies Chief Solano Monument, June 3, 1934, p. 1.

31. Vallejo Times-Herald, June 18, 1951 (Vallejo, Calif.).

32. The Sunday Chronicle, Oct. 9, 1887 (San Francisco, California).

33. San Francisco Solano Libro de bautismos, 3 Vols.
No date of publication, no pagination. Manuscript, Bancroft
Library, Berkeley, California.

34. In 1835 a Chilean carpenter, Andres Ramos, deserted
his ship in San Francisco. In time he became acquainted
with the Solano brothers. He called the older number one,
and the younger number two. In Chile it was the custom,
apparently, to designate with numbers the members of the
same family who had the same baptismal name.

35. Interview with Rulofson.

36. Lois Ann Woodward, Monument of Chief Solano (Berkeley:
California Historical Landmarks Series, 1937), p. 4.

37. The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. XXII (San
Francisco: The History Co., 1886), p. 361.

CHAPTER II

SOLANO MEETS VALLEJO

Chief Solano's life acquired its greatest significance in association with General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. That two races were able to live side by side in the same area, even though for a short period, was due to an alliance formed by these two men. Each needed the other for the maintenance of his position. Upon this somewhat precarious premise was based a remarkable liaison.

Vallejo was born in Monterey on July 7, 1808, the son of Ignacio Vallejo and Maria Lugo. When he was seven he began his formal education. An ex-soldier served as master in the one-room schoolhouse. More interested in the logic of discipline than in the theory of education, the boys spent the greater amount of their time in learning ways to avoid corporal punishment. Among Vallejo's boyhood friends had been Juan Bautista Alvarado and Jose Castro, both future governors of California. Governor Sola, discouraged in his efforts to found an effective school, took three special proteges, Mariano Vallejo, Juan Bautista Alvarado, and Jose Castro. He supplied them with books, newspapers, and copies of public documents from Mexico.

When he was fifteen, Vallejo petitioned for enrollment as a cadet in the presidial company at Monterey. Shortly after his entry into the Mexican Army, he was appointed

secretary to the governor, Luis Arguello. This close association with Arguello no doubt gave Vallejo his first big opportunity. When he had just passed his twenty-first birthday he was put in command of the Presidio of San Francisco.

In 1812 the Russians founded Fort Ross on the coast a short distance north of San Francisco. Moreover the fort and colony prospered and farmers and wood choppers began to move into the adjacent wilderness. This successful colonizing attempt alarmed first the Spanish and then the Mexicans. It began to appear as though the Russians were going to carve themselves an empire out of the Pacific Coast.

Ultimately the Mexicans decided that to hold the country north of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, they must occupy it. Accordingly Governor Jose Figueroa instructed Vallejo to establish a garrison, town and colony in the Sonoma Valley.¹ At the ex-mission of San Francisco de Solano, where he had spent nearly a year as comisionado of secularization, Vallejo established himself with a small force in the summer of 1835. It was during this year that Vallejo supposedly became acquainted with Chief Solano.²

Under the secularization program the Indians were supposed to receive their freedom and title to their lands. A few did receive land, but most of them were forced to find homes as best they could. Their rancherias had been given

out as private ranchos to the white men.³ There were some Indians who might have made fairly good citizens but who, under the government as it then existed, rapidly relapsed into idleness and vagrancy. They regarded the white men as superior beings and were inclined to imitate them in their vices rather than in their virtues. When in 1835 Solano saw Vallejo's establishment, primarily military, being settled in the middle of Indian country, he began to doubt even more the white padres' talk of peace and mutual helpfulness. His counselors began to murmur against these large numbers of white men who were moving into their territory.⁴

In the years immediately following the tragic episode at Yuliyul, Solano had avoided all-out warfare against the Spanish. By 1835, however, he had reversed his position. This about face was due to several factors: the increasing pressure of his medicine men and counselors; the presence of white settlers and soldiers at Sonoma; the failure of the San Francisco de Solano Mission and the obvious hypocrisy of the white men. The padres preached love and comradeship and the laymen beguiled with liquor and false words. It is no wonder that the Indians were now ready for revolt and vengeance against the men who spoke with forked tongues. The Indians of Sonoma Valley accepted Solano as their chief--the Sonomas, Guillicas, Kanimares, Simbalakees, Petalumas, and Wapos. The Indians of Napa Valley considered Solano as their head--the Mayacommas, Calajomanas, Caymus, Napas, Ulu-cas, and Suscols. The Indians of Suisun Valley also regarded

Solano as their leader--the Suisuns, Pulpones, Tolenos, and Ullulatas.⁵

Solano and his counselors planned a great uprising. They were aware of the odds in battle against them, but decided that the power of the white man's guns would be offset by the ferocity of their own brave warriors. General Vallejo heard rumors of the impending uprising and led a force of two hundred men into Suscol Valley where the Indians awaited them. Suscol was then the largest Suisun village.⁶ It was located half a mile east of the Napa River and eight or nine miles north of Vallejo. A great battle ensued in which the Indians were defeated and driven off.⁷ But this defeat at Suscol only seemed to exasperate the Indians, for immediately more Indians gathered from the adjacent valleys, completely hemming in Vallejo and his detachment of soldiers. Vallejo sent a messenger to notify Figueroa of his predicament, and asked for immediate reinforcements. Figueroa replied that he would come himself with six hundred men, and he designated Petaluma Creek as the place of rendezvous. After the arrival of this large force the Indians concluded that it would be wiser to make treaties than to fight.⁸ Solano sought to confer with Vallejo who waited for him alone under the spreading boughs of a huge oak tree.⁹ Solano's uniform consisted simply of a loin cloth and strings of wood and bead ornaments around his neck. Black feathers in his headband indicated his rank of chief. He was unarmed, as were the group of Indians who accompanied him. At a cer-

tain distance from the oak tree, Solano told his counselors to stop, whereupon he proceeded alone. The two men discussed the mutual advantages of an alliance. Vallejo said that his greatest ambition was to see the peaceful occupation of the North Bay country. Solano agreed to support this desire if in return Vallejo would aid him and the Suisuns in their perpetual warfare against the Satiyomis, who held the territory to the north and west. Out of this discussion an alliance developed that lasted for two decades, until Solano's death. Vallejo, generous in victory, had laid the cornerstone of his Indian policy.¹⁰

Some writers believe that Solano contained within his makeup astuteness, malice, valor. Accustomed from his youth to fighting against the Cainameros and their allies, the Satiyomis, he had acquired certain experience. In his middle age this experience secured for him and his Suisuns a position that caused the other tribes of this region to envy them. It would be absurd to believe that Vallejo and his few soldiers, at this period, could have sustained themselves at Sonoma for even a week without the determined help of Chief Solano.¹¹ Solano had more than a mere alliance with the Vallejos, Mariano and his brother, Salvador. There also existed a sincere feeling of loyalty and friendship.¹² Vallejo cultivated his newly-won ally's friendship partly because he realized the means it would give him to control the Indians, and partly because he respected and admired Solano for his personal qualities. Vallejo had been advised

to use peaceful means on the frontier whenever possible, but to resort to force when he felt necessity compelled him to do so. Apparently he felt compelled many times for there subsequently occurred more than a hundred campaigns, in which Solano, in most instances, was a major participant.¹³

In the fall of 1835 Salvador Vallejo marched north to aid Solano against the Yolotoys. This was an inter-tribal battle primarily as the Yolotoys were not in a position geographically to threaten Vallejo's position. Solano took immediate advantage of his alliance with Vallejo to settle a personal matter--his enmity with Zampay, chief of the Yolotoys. He desired Solano's place as chief of the Suisuns, whom he wished to control, as well as their allies, the Napa-jos. To put himself in control of these tribes he began a bitter war against Solano and Vallejo. He planned to drive the white men out of Alta California. The Yolotoy-Satiyomi war, which lasted well over a year, resulted.

There were numerous diverse incidents accompanying this campaign. One of them in particular was the capture or abduction of Isidora, whom Solano took with him to become one of his many wives.¹⁴ During this Satiyomi campaign Solano and his men were accused of acts of fiendish barbarity. They may have buried captives alive tied to stakes.¹⁵ Charles Brown, whom Bancroft mentions as a possible member of this expedition, has related that

"when the enemy's rancheria was attacked, Solano committed one of the most brutal acts. A woman

was far advanced in pregnancy, and carried a child on her back. Solano killed the child first with his knife, and then thrust the weapon into the woman's belly, ripped it open, and dragged the infant out--three cold-blooded murders. He came very near being shot for them, but Vallejo's orders saved him. Narrator, however, owed a little later, his own life to Solano."¹⁶

Although this single instance of barbarity is difficult to duplicate, Indian practices on captives of war were in general, equally horrifying and depraved.¹⁷

NOTES

1. The letters accompanying the instructions to Vallejo were dated June 24, 1835. The pueblo that was established was called Sonoma, which to the Indians meant "Valley of the Moon."

2. One of the first campaigns on which Solano and Vallejo were supposed to have embarked was against the Satiyomi Indians. When Vallejo visited the new town of Santa Ana y Farias, near Santa Rosa, in October, 1834, a daring Cainamero stole one of his fine mules and fled to the Satiyomis for protection. Vallejo immediately sent an envoy to demand the return of his mule and the arrest of the offender. The Satiyomis seized the envoy and tortured him. Preparations were made for a battle with Succara, chief of the Satiyomis. Vallejo was ultimately victorious. In this series of engagements Solano had charge of the rear guard, keeping the line of communication open and sending up supplies.

Hubert Howe Bancroft casts some doubt upon the actual occurrence of this Satiyomi campaign. "The campaigns of Vallejo and Figueroa in the north, and their bloody battles with the fierce Satiyomis near Santa Rosa, which must have occurred in 1834 if at all, I have noticed elsewhere, expressing my opinion that, if not purely imaginary, these events as related by several writers were grossly exaggerated." (P. 360, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Vol. 20)

3. Myrtle Garrison, Romance and History of California Ranchos (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Co., 609 Mission Street, 1935), p. 142.

4. At this time Solano had under his command perhaps as many as 40,000 Indians. At his peak of influence Solano controlled or held sway over the Indians of 34 tribes. These tribes were spread out over six counties--Marin, Contra Costa, Solano, Yolo, Napa and Sonoma. By 1835, however, Solano had not yet reached his peak of influence as he was materially strengthened by a political and military alliance with Vallejo subsequent to this year. However by 1835 Solano had certainly extended his influence beyond the Suisun Valley, to the Napa Valley, and perhaps, too, the Sonoma Valley.

5. Bancroft, op. cit., Vol. I, The Native Races, Vol. I, pp. 362-3.

6. Yulyul had been the largest village but had been destroyed by the Spanish in 1817.

7. General Vallejo lost two men killed and several were wounded. Of the seven hundred Indians engaged, two hundred were killed and a large number were wounded.

In 1874 Isidora Solano, one of the Chief's many wives, gave a description of the multitude that opposed Vallejo and his soldiers. "When Solano went out to fight he armed his men with daggers made of flint, and lances and arrows pointed with flints, all dipped in poisonous herbs. His warriors did not wear coat, shirt, shoes, trousers, or hat; they were not foolish enough to have anything on the body by which anyone could take hold, but went entirely naked with only a bunch of feathers on the head. The Indians who carried the food wore gray feathers pulled out of wild fowl. The fighting men carried lances and arrows, with white duck feathers on their heads, except the captain, who wore black feathers." Isidora (Princess Solano), "My Years with Chief Solano" Touring Topics (Feb. 1930), p. 39. Also found as No. 12 "Relation of Isidora, Widow of the Indian Chief Solano" Sketches of Californian Pioneers, 1874. Written or dictated by themselves for Bancroft's Pacific Library, San Francisco, California. Translation can be found in California Folder on Solano, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. |

8. Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Solano County, California (San Francisco: 1878), p. 14.

9. Vallejo was only twenty-seven at the time and still a lieutenant in the Mexican Army.

10. Hubert Howe Bancroft believes that this policy "must be regarded as excellent and effective when compared with any other policy ever followed in California. Closely allied with Solano he made treaties with the gentile tribes, insisted on their being liberally and justly treated when at peace, and punished them severely for any manifestation of hostility." (P. 70-71, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 21)

11. Henry Cerruti, as dictated to by Sr. Don Jose de Jesus Vallejo, Reminiscences Historicas de California for the Bancroft Library, now on deposit there; (MS. 1874), pp. 83-4.

12. In spite of this mutual regard, however, Hubert Howe Bancroft believes that "the Indians were wronged often enough in individual cases by Mariano's subordinates; some of whom, and notably his brother Salvador (whom Rodney Martin Rulofson believes was a rough, hard-drinking, cruel and undiplomatic man) were with difficulty controlled; but such reports have been greatly exaggerated and acts of glaring injustice were comparatively rare." (P. 71, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 21)

13. Hubert Howe Bancroft has written that "the Indian hostilities were trifling for the most part. Over a large extent of country the Indians lived mainly on the flesh of stolen horses, and cattle were killed for their hides when

money to buy liquor could not be less laboriously obtained by the sale of other stolen articles." (P. 361, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 20)

14. Hubert Howe Bancroft has written that "Isidora was still living at Sonoma in 1874, at an advanced age, and furnished a Relacion that is not without interest." (P. 727, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 22) Although Bancroft did not quote Isidora's Relacion, part of it and its sources are quoted below: "I belonged to Solano before I married him; even before I was baptised. I am not a Suisun like him, but I belong to the tribe of Chuructos, and once when Solano was on a business trip there he stole me. My father, together with many of the Satiyomi, pursued him, but he could not overcome him. My father's tribe lived near Cache Creek; I do not know the name of the county to which it belongs today, for I have forgotten it." [P. 39, Touring Topics, Feb., 1930: "My years with Chief Solano" by Isidora (Princess Solano)].

15. "Charles Brown claims to have accompanied an expedition apparently identical with this. He says the force consisted of sixty Californians, twenty-two foreigners, and two hundred Indians, lasting nearly three weeks in the rainy season. One hundred captives were taken, and some acts of fiendish barbarity were committed by Solano and his men. Narrator was wounded." (P. 360, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 20)

16. Brown's statement 12-13 from Selections from Californian Folder on Solano (Indian Chief), Biographical and Reference Section, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

17. Isidora Solano remarked in her Relacion that when "my husband, at the head of eight thousand men, conquered all his enemies, I prevented him from killing them, as was then customary, by tying them to trees and shooting them with arrows."

In general no quarter was given in warfare and no male prisoners were taken, except such as were mortally wounded. These, as well as the dead bodies secured, were turned over to the old men, who amused themselves by decapitating them and afterwards taking off their scalps, which were dried and preserved as trophies. If women or children were taken, they were kept as slaves. Sometimes they would eat small portions of chiefs or braves whom they had slain in battle. It is also possible that the eyes may have sometimes been plucked out and displayed as trophies.

In an interview, Arnold Pilling remarked that head taking was fairly common procedure among the Californian Indians. He also said that killing by stoning to death may have been used on captives of war.

After killing a prisoner, whether it be man, woman, or child, the Indians would disembowel the corpse and string

the intestines around on bushes near the enemy village. They would also cut off the genitals and pound them on a rock. Erminie W. Voegelin, Culture Element Distributions XX North-east California Anthropological Records, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942), p. 211.

CHAPTER III

INDIAN CAMPAIGNS

The binding tie between Vallejo and Solano was the dependence of one upon the other for assistance in maintaining each other's position. Each gave the other the advantage in warfare without which it is doubtful if either's position could be long maintained.

In March, 1836, Vallejo was gratified when some of his friendly Indians appeared at Sonoma with bands of horses they had recovered from the Mokelumnes who had stolen them from Sonoma. As a reward for this faithful conduct, Vallejo decreed a whole week of feasting in Sonoma. A feature of the celebration was the presentation of an Indian girl named Yoto to Chief Solano, who had assisted the friendly tribes in recovering their horses.

There had been several bitter battles in the Yolotoy-Satiyomi war. Vallejo's success in these campaigns was largely due to the work of Solano and his Indians in keeping open the long lines of communication and supply. To reward Solano for his faithful service and to strengthen his power among the Indians, Vallejo presented Solano with a guard of honor. He had already given Solano a good horse with a silver mounted saddle, a beautiful silver watch and embroidered grenadier boots. Solano, not wanting to be outdone in an exchange of gifts, had given Vallejo gifts of

considerable value consisting of skins, baskets and dried fish. The regular company that Vallejo organized for the guard of honor consisted of forty-four Suisun and Napajo Indians. They were commanded by the Infantry Sergeant, Sabas Fernandez, upon whom was conferred the rank of Sub-Lieutenant. These Indians had capes, jackets of woven stuff, pants, linen jackets or shirts, barracks caps, shoes, knapsacks, hats, blankets and provision pouches. Two Indians, one called Benito Vallejo and the other Telmo Canedo, were appointed corporals. For nearly two years there were only two casualties in this honor guard. However, by September, 1839, due to an epidemic of smallpox, there remained only twenty-two soldiers, including the two corporals, two fifiers and two drummers. Of these twenty-two, three were incapacitated due to wounds received fighting the Satiyomis. In appreciation of their loyal conduct, and as an example to the rest, Vallejo ordered them to receive the same amount of food, clothes and money as the rest of the guard.

One day Vallejo ordered Sabas Fernandez to form his company. All the Indian soldiers appeared dressed in uniform and holding their flintlocks in their hands. Then Vallejo requested the presence of Solano who shortly rode up on a fine horse. In the presence of the guard, Vallejo told him that it was to the interests of all good Indians to form a company whose special job would be to guard Prince Solano. He then had Solano given all the honors which were extended to a colonel of a corps, and departed,

leaving Solano greatly pleased by this formal ceremony and presentation. Solano proceeded to inspect his company and told them that they must bring in Zampay, chief of the Yolotoys. He pretended that he wanted to seize Zampay with the object of pleasing Vallejo. Actually he wanted to get rid of Zampay who, descended from one branch of the Suisuns, aspired to govern them. Solano feared Zampay for this reason. He considered him a very powerful rival and he had promised himself no rest until he had brought about Zampay's downfall.¹

It was shortly after the first Satiyomi campaign when the expected arrival at San Francisco of the padres and Hajar colonists made it advisable to have a location ready to receive them. Sonoma was the site chosen for the colony and Vallejo was assigned to the job of making advance preparations. While enroute, Vallejo sent for Solano and told him that he was bringing a considerable number of white men and women to live at Sonoma. He said further that these people were coming as friends of the Suisuns and their allies, the Sonomas and Napajos. Solano replied that if the white people came as friends, he would receive them as such, provided that they would help the Suisuns in their wars against the Satiyomis. Vallejo accepted this proposition and ordered Solano to go to Sonoma and announce to the Indians the coming of the white people.

After three days of navigation, the party arrived at the Sonoma estuary. They sailed up to Pulpula, actually

Poppe Landing. Here Vallejo met Captain Pulpula and Chief Solano, who awaited him with three thousand warriors.² Solano had custody of the horses brought by land by the soldiers, as well as the two hundred Indians of the tribe of San Rafael of Aguanui. Vallejo ordered the tents set up and ambassadors sent to the tribes of the interior, urging them to send representatives who could make treaties with him, the representative of the Mexican Government.

Two days later Vallejo, according to his own account, found his camp surrounded by nearly eleven thousand Indians who said they had come to welcome him. Vallejo called the interpreters to explain to them that the government had not sent him to deprive the Indians of their property, but to cultivate friendly relations with them, and if possible to induce them to form a single great family. Solano spoke to them, describing the advantages that would result to them if the white men came and lived among them. He pointed out that by themselves they could not defeat the Satiyomis. However, allied with the whites, they would be in a state of equality with the Satiyomis. Solano also said that he wanted Vallejo to remain and that if he went, he, Solano, would go too. Hearing this, the assembled Indians shouted that Vallejo should remain.

Then the Indians went to see the presents that the soldiers had brought up from their boats. In the name of the Mexican Government, Vallejo presented each tribal chief

with red and blue blankets, tobacco, coarse cotton cloth and glass beads of various colors. The Indian chiefs were very willing to accept Vallejo's presents and in return invited him to an Indian supper. In the middle of the meal they gave him a present of baskets and a quiver full of arrows. Then they began a great dance in which the men danced nude and the women, from the waist down, were covered with deer skins or pieces of linen or woolen stuff. Vallejo had never before witnessed such a spectacle. He had never seen so many thousands of Indian women gathered in one place. When he saw them all dancing and singing and gracefully swaying to the strange Indian rhythms, he said that he thought he had been transported to paradise. At dawn Solano invited Vallejo to a sumptuous breakfast of pinole, fish, ducks and venison. After breakfast Vallejo and his soldiers mounted up and set out for Sonoma, with the Sonoma Indians and five hundred Licatiuts going on before them.³

Thus Vallejo had been successful in making a treaty of peace and alliance with the chiefs of seven different tribes. This pact was approved by Governor Chico in Sonoma twenty days later, June 27, 1836. If Vallejo believed that this treaty meant peace on the frontier, he was mistaken. While in Monterey, he received news that the Indians of the northern frontier were restless, and that the ferocious Zampay had assassinated several Indian leaders who had been devoted to Zampay. Immediately he sent Solano II, Chief Solano's brother, to Sonoma to make preparations for a hun-

dred-man campaign. He left for Sonoma on December twelfth. Vallejo remained in Monterey until December twenty-fifth, when he left for Sonoma in company with forty-four soldiers.

At Sonoma Captain Salvador Vallejo confirmed all that he had written about the movements of Zampay. Vallejo determined to undertake at once a campaign against Zampay. With this purpose in mind he ordered Solano brought to him. He explained to Solano that he was to gather his men in preparation for an immediate expedition against the Yolotoys. Solano listened attentively to the plans, but disapproved of them. He believed that Zampay was very shrewd, that he could not be defeated by force, but by cleverness. Furthermore, he remarked that winter was a very poor time for such an undertaking, and that they should wait for the summer. If Vallejo would wait until June, he, Solano, would personally be responsible for the successful outcome of the expedition. Vallejo further questioned Solano about Zampay's resources. Solano replied that he had carefully followed Zampay's movements, for he was his most hated and feared rival. Vallejo was finally convinced and he consented to postpone the expedition until the end of spring.

In June, 1837, the delayed expedition got under way with Captain Salvador Vallejo first in command, and Solano second in command. Without the knowledge of Salvador, Solano had requested the soldiers not to kill Zampay if at all possible, but to take him prisoner. Prior to the expedition,

Solano had been able to intrigue with certain of Zampay's counselors so that in the course of battle they would desert him. This gave one of the soldiers, Manuel Cantua, an opportunity to ride up to Zampay and lasso him. The expedition, after losing almost all of its pack animals, returned safely to Sonoma. For the safety of the inhabitants, Vallejo thought Zampay should be executed. Solano, however, pleaded with Vallejo to spare Zampay's life. Vallejo was puzzled as heretofore Solano had always demonstrated his preference for sanguinary methods of disposal. That he should now take the stand for the life of his most feared and hated rival, made Vallejo very curious as to his motive. Vallejo knew that Salvador and Solano were good friends, so he decided to question Salvador, who explained that when Manuel Cantua lassoed Zampay he had suggested hanging him. Solano interceded remarking that "A dead Zampay was useless, whereas a live Zampay was a pledge that guaranteed that he agreed with everything that Solano had been telling him."

Mariano and Salvador were still conversing when Solano came in. On being questioned about his plans for Zampay, he admitted that he wanted to save his life so that he could have the pleasure of telling him every day that he was his savior. Vallejo did not think it wise to lose Solano's friendship and so entrusted to him the custody of Zampay. From this time on Zampay changed his life and dedicated himself to agriculture and cattle raising. He lived to a very advanced age and at the time of his death he left quite a

large fortune to his children.⁴

The apprehension of Zampay inspired fear in Succara, the chief of the Satiyomis. As soon as Succara heard about the capture of his ally, he sent envoys to Sonoma asking that he be heard, for he had terms to propose. Vallejo named a place for an interview and stipulated the number of warriors that should accompany him. When Succara had accepted Vallejo's proposal, Vallejo proceeded to the residence of Mr. Nicolas Carriger. After two days of discussion, Vallejo signed an agreement composed of eleven articles. This agreement was interpreted to Succara and approved by his counselors, Cali-Venge, Ipuv and Calpela, who gave no sign of resentment when they accepted the part of the agreement which obliged them to live in Sonoma. Succara and Cali-Venge made their X's at the bottom of the document and Vallejo did the same. Chief Solano, Captain Juan B. Cooper, Captain Salvador Vallejo and Dr. Thomas Yont signed the agreement as witnesses.

Next Vallejo gave presents to his new ally. His gifts consisted of rough cut and leaf tobacco, glass beads of all colors, blankets and red kerchiefs. Succara's gifts to Vallejo consisted of fishing nets, bird feather blankets, dried fish, deer skins and six young girls. Vallejo kept the skins for the use of his men and gave Solano the girls, feather blankets, fishing nets and dried fish. Vallejo made an unequal division, taking for himself and the white men the smaller portion of the gifts. He had very few

soldiers with him, and Solano found himself surrounded by several Suisun and Cainamero chiefs who were keeping an eye on Vallejo. They watched his actions very closely to see that he did not take the major portion.

After making the exchange of gifts, Solano invited Succara and his retinue to go to Sonoma for a dance. The invitation was accepted and the Indians danced three days and nights. Vallejo has recalled with pleasure the graceful movements of the daughters and wives of the Suisun warriors. It was customary for the Indian women to dance with the greater part of their bodies exposed. After the dances, two days were spent in bull fighting, always an important part of any celebration. The Indians had their own version of bull fighting, considerably different from the Spanish method. A bull was lassoed and his forefeet tied together. Then an Indian mounted and his feet were tied together under the animal's belly. When the bull was released he usually dashed off, being further goaded by the rider, whose hands being free, whipped his mount as hard as he could. Several Indians on fast ponies raced after the fleeing bull and plunged fish-bone pointed banderillas into his sides. This annoyance further enraged the animal until at last, becoming weak from loss of blood, he was again lassoed and the rider allowed to dismount.

A variation of this activity were the bear and bull fights. Simply cruel, grisly contests between enraged animals, these gory spectacles were more popular with the Mexi-

cans than with the Indians. Also the Indians preferred the former as it gave them an opportunity for physical participation. When the Indians had finally gotten their fill of entertainment, Succara said goodbye and set out for home. Apparently he had been well pleased with the reception that Solano and Vallejo had given him.⁵

In 1836 Governor Alvarado invited Solano to visit Monterey. His motive for making the invitation may have been to discuss a grant of land. Solano did not go, probably because Vallejo did not want him to. Also during this year Vallejo and Solano were preoccupied with Indian warfare along the frontier.⁶

Desiring to repay Solano for the good work that he had given to him in the capture of Zampay, Vallejo obtained for him from Governor Alvarado, a grant of four leagues of land situated on the Suisun. This land and much more belonged to Solano and the Suisuns, but he had ceded it to Vallejo so that it became the property of the government. Vallejo thought he should grant the four leagues to Solano to protect him from poverty. The capture of Zampay, however, was one instance in which Solano asked for Vallejo's aid in a personal matter. The Yolotoys were not in a position geographically to threaten Vallejo's position. Thus to say that Vallejo was now rewarding Solano with a grant of land, is to imply that perhaps Vallejo had some personal reason for this seemingly generous and thoughtful act. Later developments

will tend to bear out this point of view.

Tradition says that Solano was the principal chief of the unconverted Indians, that he was born captain of the Suisuns, and that he was the owner of a sufficient number of horses and cattle to establish a rancho. Accordingly he requested that he be granted four leagues of land in the Suisun Valley.⁷ It would seem that Solano was making a sincere attempt to get along with the Mexicans. Although he did not doubt that his hunting grounds were his and his people's, he was willing to conform to Vallejo's suggestions. He accepted the Spanish system as represented by Vallejo because he and his people could live their own way of life.⁸ Vallejo asserted that Solano was prince of the unconverted Indians as far north as the Columbia River and east to the Sierras.⁹ By asserting that he was "Chief of the unconverted Indians," Solano won religious freedom for his people. This assertion meant that the Indians would not be forced into mission life or the Catholic faith or the Mexican cultural pattern.

In his petition to Vallejo dated January 16, 1837, Solano was shrewd enough to incorporate this guarantee for his people:

"To the Commandante-General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Sonoma: Francisco Solano, principal chief of the unconverted Indians and born captain of the Suisuns, in due form before your honor represents: That, being a free man, and owner of a sufficient number of horses and cattle to establish a rancho, he solicits from the strict justice and goodness of your honor, that you be pleased to grant him the land of the Suisun, with its known appurtenances,

which are a little more than four square leagues from the Portzuela to the Salina de Sacha. Said lands belongs to him by hereditary right from his ancestors, and he is actually in possession of it; but he wishes to revalidate his rights in accordance with the existing laws of our republic and of the order of colonization recently decreed by the supreme government. He therefore prays that your honor be pleased to grant him the land which he asks for, and procure for him, from the proper sources, the titles which may be necessary for his security, and that you will also admit this on common paper, there being none of the corresponding stamp in this place.
(signed) Francisco Solano"

Vallejo immediately issued a decree granting Solano provisionally the occupancy and use of the four leagues of land. He also instructed Solano to petition for the usual title deeds in order to make his rights valid.

It took five years for Solano to get the title deeds and eight years for the departmental assembly to approve this petition. If these delays seem unduly long, they cannot be attributed to any reluctance on the part of the parties concerned to substantiate Solano's claim and Vallejo's recommendation, but rather attributed to the tempo of the times as well as a faint indication of the efficiency of operation of the government, or perhaps one of the many symptoms of its not-too-distant demise.

NOTES

1. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 136-137.
2. This is an obvious exaggeration. Alfred Louis Kroeber has estimated the average population of any settlement of this region at not far from a hundred persons per unit. Prosperous groups reached two or three hundred.
3. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 13-17.
4. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 236-237.
5. Succara had noted the small number of soldiers in the Sonoma garrison and Vallejo believed that he conceived a plan for capturing this northernmost outpost. There is an incident in Chapter IV in which a large band of hostile Indians from the Clear Lake region came down to Sonoma in an attempt to surprise the town and garrison at night and massacre all the inhabitants. This incident may have been Succara's plan for the destruction of Sonoma.
6. "In the middle of October, 1836, General Vallejo announced that Solano had asked and received permission to visit the capital with eighty Indians. I do not know if the visit was made; but if so, it was probably with a smaller number, who formed part of Vallejo's escort, as he was at San Francisco October 22nd and 23rd, enroute to Monterey. September 3rd, 1836, Pablo de la Guerra, in the name of his own and other Santa Barbara families, protests against Vallejo's proposed sending of Solano with two thousand Indians. He begs Vallejo not to run such a risk for the sake of frightening Alvarado. October 2nd, 1836, Salvador Vallejo to Guerra. He has urged his brother in vain not to send Solano to Monterey. He hopes to influence Solano, however, not to take more than one thousand Indians. These letters purport to be copies of originals, and are in the handwriting of a man whom I have often detected in questionable practices. Doubtless the numbers are pure inventions, and the dates are suspicious. Possibly the whole is a forgery, but it is not unlikely that Vallejo may have made a threat and used large figures. October 16th, 1836, Vallejo to Alvarado, announcing Solano's departure. Ochenta in the original is changed clumsily into ochocientos by the same genius mentioned in the last note. Proofs of Vallejo's trip and presence at San Francisco on October 22nd-3rd, 1836, and indications that he had thirty-one men in all." (P. 598, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 20) Bancroft may have been mistaken as other sources mention a similar trip to Monterey in 1839. See Chapter IV.
7. The Sunday Chronicle (San Francisco, California), October 9, 1887.

8. Interview with Rulofson.

9. This was another Vallejo exaggeration. The greater he built up the magnitude of the power and influence of his ally, Solano, the greater his own position and prestige became as a result of alliance with such a potentate.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT SCOURGE

Late in 1837 General Vallejo sent to Fort Ross a corporal of cavalry named Ignacio Miramontes to bring back a cargo of cloth and leather goods for the troops stationed at Sonoma. When Miramontes and his men returned they also brought smallpox which spread into an epidemic. Vallejo and his family were immediately vaccinated. While Chief Solano and some of the other Indians agreed to be vaccinated, most of them later refused. There was a large number of natives in Sonoma both in the mission and on Vallejo's ranch properties as laborers. He moved the mission population to a place a mile and a half away from the mission, all to no avail. The disease moved out over a wide circle affecting the natives over most of north central California. It nearly exterminated the inhabitants in the valleys of Sonoma, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Russian River, Clear Lake, the Tulares and extended to the slopes of Mount Shasta. The duration of the epidemic was considerable. It started in late 1837, continued through 1838 and was still raging in 1839, by which time seventy-five thousand savages had been wiped out.¹ Of the forty thousand Indians under Solano's influence, only two hundred of the Suisuns in the Yulyul area survived. Solano had become a chief without a tribe.

In the epidemic years the civilized people living in

Sonoma were very few in number and badly supplied with medicines and surgical instruments. Although they were willing, they were unable to minister to the needs of the stubborn and superstitious Indians. To make matters worse, the Indians believed in the effectiveness of their temescales and clear streams, and had nothing but contempt for doctors, pills and syringes.² Father Cuesta tried to dissuade the natives from this mode of treatment, but entirely without success.

Apparently with the exception of Vallejo, relative indifference seemed to be the attitude toward the epidemic. He addressed letters to authorities, military, civil and religious, all over California advising and warning of the situation and its dangers. Apparently, since the disease confined itself to the wild tribes of the north and the settlements around San Francisco Bay, the southern part of the province did not feel that the matter demanded urgent attention. There were a few Indians left. Those who had acquired the taste for liquor hung around the bars, doing odd jobs in exchange for whiskey. The women were equally debased, the victims of gonorrhea and syphilis. Solano himself was not entirely above this miserable remnant. Frequently Vallejo would have to put his friend in the guardhouse and let him sober up.

This liking for the Mexicans' wine got Solano into serious trouble in September, 1838. Earlier in the year some men³ who had heard of the richness of Vallejo's lands, de-

vised a scheme for getting hold of them without paying him their just value. These men knew that as long as Solano and Vallejo worked together, no outsider would be able to take advantage of the Indians who lived on Vallejo's properties. They also knew that Solano was very devoted to Vallejo and would not sell his services at any price when they involved Vallejo's interests. So they resorted to cunning. They buried several barrels of Peruvian pisco near Suscol.⁴ On the pretext of conferring about the sale of wheat, they sent for Solano and some of the other principal Cainamero and Suisun leaders. They opened the conference by drinking to Solano. One toast followed another until Solano was so drunk he did not know what he was saying. The strangers then persuaded him to give his consent to the stealing of Indian children. In the following two weeks more than thirty little children were carried off to the other side of the bay.

Apparently the strangers believed that by involving Solano in the crime of kidnapping, they would be able to jeopardize Vallejo's position too. If the authorities at Monterey thought that Vallejo should be removed from his post, these men probably thought that they could move in and take over Vallejo's properties at very little cost to themselves. Eventually Vallejo received the news and also learned that Solano had consented to this outrage, the consequences of which could not but fail to compromise him. Everybody knew that Solano never began expeditions or negotiations without first consulting Vallejo.

Vallejo was determined to jail Solano as soon as possible. He ordered immediate preparations be made for the consequences of this act. All civilians in Sonoma and the outlying districts were placed under arms. He sent to Fort Ross for a large supply of powder, and stored a large supply of provisions in the barracks warehouses. When he considered himself in a position strong enough to withstand the assaults of Solano's rescuers, he ordered Solano brought to him. After confronting him with the charge, he had him locked up. No sooner was Solano deposited behind bars when a great commotion flared up. The Suisuns, Napajos and Cainameros took up their weapons and approached Sonoma, determined to free Solano. The great Sonoma plaza was soon filled with Indian warriors. The roads leading to Sonoma were covered with Indians all determined to free Solano. Vallejo saw this growing multitude. He knew that if he appeared weak and yielded to the threats, the prestige that he had gradually acquired over five years of hard work would be lost. He determined to follow the plan he had laid out that same morning. He had alerted the troops to fire on anyone who tried to cross the circle of riatas that he had ordered placed around the jail. The firm stand of the soldiers and the civilians stopped the Indians in the area that Vallejo had marked out for them. They formed themselves into groups for consultations.

While the Indians were discussing their next move, Vallejo, accompanied by Don Antonio Pena, went to Solano's

prison and had him brought to his office. He went over the complaints that had been made against Solano. He made Solano see the wickedness of kidnapping. He also explained that his (Vallejo's) reputation would be stained if he did not punish such an inhuman crime. Solano was convinced of his wrongdoing. Full of repentance, he promised to do all that he could to see that the stolen children would be returned to their mothers. He said further that he was a man with many cultivated fields, more than two thousand head of cattle, and dozens of Satiyomi girls. If Vallejo wanted to take it all for punishment, he would tell his people that this was the way it had to be. Vallejo explained that all his properties put together were not enough to repair the damage he had caused. He would personally take charge of returning the stolen children to their mothers. To do this he had to know the names of the purchasers. Solano assured him that he had only had dealings with the Castros, and that he personally had not turned over any child. He said that Cacique Lacay, one of the minor chiefs, knew the purchasers and that he would order him to confess all he knew about the matter.

And to prove to Vallejo that he had been probed for bigger things than selling Indian children, Solano told Vallejo of the Castros' plan for overwhelming the Commandante-General's office. Vallejo listened attentively and noted the names of the men who had come across the bay to undermine his position. Immediately he dictated a proclamation to his secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Don Victor Prudon, which asserted Solano's innocence as well as indicating

the steps that would be taken to return the children to their parents. Vallejo read the rough draft to Solano who offered to give him as many warriors as he needed for the expedition he was sending out under Don Antonio Pena. Within three hours Vallejo ran off a hundred copies of his proclamation and ordered Solano to distribute them to all the ranchos and haciendas between Sonoma and Mission San Jose.⁵ Solano left immediately to carry out this order. He made several speeches to the Indians admitting his blame. He also promised to never again trust strangers who opened negotiations with bottles of liquor.

Just as the friends of Solano had hurried into Sonoma to demand the liberation of their prince, so had there come a group of Napajos whose children had been stolen. These people demanded that the criminal who had caused them so much sorrow should be removed from his high position. They demanded that his place should be given to another chief who had more respect for the feelings of his people. These Napajos were not the only ones who were shouting for Solano's punishment. With them were many Cainameros, treacherous Indians, who in the hour of Solano's glory swore everlasting allegiance to him. At the same time they secretly conspired with the Satiyomis to overthrow him. Vallejo was aware of their deceit and he adopted measures to thwart their plans.⁶ He realized that this crime was done to injure him politically. Certain Spanish parties conspired to injure him through his ally, Solano, who, in this particular

instance, showed no intelligence whatsoever. However, he liked his liquor and was drawn in.⁷

Though these incidents of Solano's life seem unrelated, there is a thin and often difficult-to-distinguish thread woven through them. This thread is his loyalty and allegiance to Vallejo, without whom, Solano's life would have been pointless indeed, at least from the criteria of the white man's culture. For there was no real climax to Solano's life, no life-long struggle for fame and fortune. Instead he seems to have merely existed in a transitional environment, participating in the events and minor episodes of the years as they were fabricated by the vicissitudes of life, or the constant schemes of the white men. In large part Solano's story is Vallejo's story. The significance of Solano's story lies in his actions in individual events and how, in others controlled or shaped by Vallejo himself, he was cast as foil or tool. For certainly Vallejo, although outwardly professing brotherly love, equality, friendship, never once forgot that Solano was his greatest weapon in the successful maintenance of his frontier policies and the subsequent fulfillment of his own ambitious desires.

One October morning in 1838 a small band of savages from Lake County walked into Sonoma, unarmed. After strolling around for half an hour, they sat down in a circle for a talk. A great bank of Indians lay hidden just outside of town. The small band had come merely to look over the ground

and plan a night attack. They paid no attention to several little boys playing nearby. One of them was a little orphan boy, Jose Altamira, who lived with the Vallejos. Jose had acquired a knowledge of the Indian language, and while the savages were planning the massacre, Jose heard and understood every word. As soon as the group had left, Jose ran to General Vallejo. Vallejo immediately sent for Solano and told him the story. Solano assured Vallejo that he would take care of the matter and left to make plans. That night the hostile Indians were overwhelmed by Solano and his men. Such was the surprise and fury of the attack, that few of the visitors escaped.⁸

There are accounts of Solano's kindly greetings to the first pioneers in the region and of his helpful advice concerning the farming of a new country.⁹ In spite of his friendship for the people of Sonoma, Solano really cherished a feeling of resentment towards white men as a class, probably because they did not treat him with the respect he thought he should have. He never let an occasion go by to play a joke on a stranger whose position was lower than his own. One such individual was the Frenchman Custot, who came to Sonoma as a beet sugar expert. He said he had made some sugar that he had actually stolen from one of Vallejo's warehouses. When accused of this crime, he did not deny it. He was told that he had made himself liable for the punishment for stealing--twenty blows of the rod. Speaking in his own defense, Custot said that he had arrived in a foreign country without money and that in order to live, he had

had to work at something. Then he asked Vallejo to pardon him considering that he was a foreigner without friends or relatives. Vallejo mulled over what he should do with Custot. Solano had been present at the hearing and he was greatly amused at the comical way Custot waved his arms while talking. He remarked that he did not think Custot should be punished because he was not a thief, but a professional clown.

Vallejo found it difficult to remain serious in the face of such proceedings. While condemning Custot's conduct, he could not but help admire his daring. He pretended to argue with Solano and then he finally told Custot that he owed his life and liberty to Solano. He ordered him to leave at once and never let him catch him on his property again. Custot begged Vallejo to give him a guide to accompany him to San Francisco. Vallejo ordered Solano to take him there on any of the weekly boats. Solano was master of the boat on which Custot was taking passage. When they arrived at San Francisco the tide was out and they could not approach the wharf. Here was an opportunity for Solano to amuse himself at Custot's expense. When the boat was three hundred yards from the landing, Solano told his crew to stop rowing. Then he turned to Custot and told him the trip was over. He said that if he did not jump into the water of his own accord, he would be thrown in. Custot had no choice but to leap overboard. With the mud up to his thighs, it was only with the greatest difficulty that he was able to reach the shore. Captain Richardson had come down to the beach be-

lieving that Custot must have some urgent message for him. Richardson took Custot to his home and supported him until he went to work for Captain Sutter.¹⁰

About the first of April, 1838, two chiefs of the Si-comne tribe appeared at Sonoma and claimed protection in accordance with the treaty they had made in 1837. They complained that the Mokelumnes, under Chief Cumuchi, had been stealing their horses and mules. Solano was sent out on a campaign which captured Cumuchi and took him to Sonoma for execution. Cumuchi was also guilty of leading horse stealing and grain burning raids as far west as Suscol.¹¹ These depredations were rather general and the soldiers were continually on the march during these last years of Mexican rule. Political affairs also occupied the attention of everybody to such an extent that horse stealing continued with little really serious opposition.

In spite of the smallpox epidemic the comparative numbers of the hostile Indians had increased, for the civil wars had lessened the numbers of the whites. Furthermore, the Indians were able to see that all was not harmonious between the chief civil and military authorities, especially as many of the mission Indians had joined their brothers in the wilds. The mission Indians understood the value of stock for food and trading. They even went so far as to contract to supply the French Canadians of the Columbia River district with hundreds of good horses each moon, although they were not engaged in stock-raising, as were certain of

the more honest Indians, notably Solano and Zampay after his capture.

Solano, at the suggestion and recommendation of Vallejo, had petitioned for a grant of land subsequently to be known as the Suisun Grant. Solano's petition bears the date of 1837, and in answer to it Governor Alvarado, on January 21, 1842, granted him the desire--four leagues in the Suisun Valley--leaving the excess which may result to the Mexican nation for its uses. There was an excess, and on November 22, 1839, Jose Francisco Armijo asked for this excess, which subsequently came to be called Tolenas. Tolenas was granted to Armijo with the provision that he should not molest or disturb the wild Indians who lived on it. Should any act of rebellion occur among the Indians, he should immediately notify Solano and abide by his advice as pertaining to the safety of the settlers. Readily accepting these provisions, Armijo at once took possession of his land.¹²

In 1839 Solano took a trip to Monterey. There seem to be two versions or interpretations of why he went, one political and the other anthropological. From Vallejo's point of view, the reasons are very obviously political. As was his policy with his red friend, Vallejo used Solano in whatever situation, political or military, he thought would work out to his best advantage. It cannot be inferred necessarily that he was ever deliberately attempting to jeopardize Solano's safety, prestige or position, but rather, in looking out for his own interests he placed Solano in the breach

whenever he thought necessary. And the breach was wide open again in 1839. Alvarado was Governor at this time. Politically Vallejo and Alvarado were at odds with each other. Vallejo was summoned to visit Alvarado at Monterey. He wanted to make a show of strength and/or protect himself with a bodyguard. Vallejo told Solano to go with him and to pick out a select group of Indians to accompany them. He realized that this showing of strength might frighten the Monterey authorities. However, he pretended to be shocked at the great number of men that showed up with Solano. Rumors preceded Solano that he would invade the capital with two thousand warriors. Vallejo was bombarded with protesting letters as far south as Los Angeles to the effect that Solano should not be permitted to enter Monterey with so many men. As a result, Vallejo asked Solano not to take over one thousand men, which was sheer nonsense as it was never intended to send even a hundred. In the end only thirty-one men made up Solano's party.¹³

In Monterey Solano was bold enough to protest to Alvarado about the quarters and food given to himself and his men. He never considered himself as one of Vallejo's subjects, but as an ally deserving of equal treatment.

Dorotea Valdez, a resident of Monterey, has described Solano's visit:

"At the time Solano visited Monterey I was residing with Senora Prudencia and I took particular notice of the tall figure of that dark-colored savage, who was dressed like the people of my race. His many

followers, however, were dressed like Indians, and wore feathers around their heads. Many of them were tattooed around their wrists, arms and legs. We disliked their presence very much because their conduct was really overbearing. Solano and his Indians were all mounted on fine horses. All had achimas, but few of them had saddles. They wore long hair, carried bows and arrows, and their appearance was such as to inspire fear. I really believed them to be devils let loose from hell. Not every one of the Indians had a dark color like Solano. Some of them had white skins. The majority looked very red in the face. I heard my mistress say that the arrival of these savages in Monterey was a plague sent by God for the purpose of punishing us for our sins. Solano did not remain long in Monterey. He was prevailed upon to return to Sonoma by Governor Alvarado and Don Pablo de la Guerra, at that time a very influential citizen of this country."¹⁴

To leave the impression that Solano went to Monterey because of political reasons, or simply because Vallejo asked him to go, is to leave one major inference or implication unanswered--the anthropological or cultural. It is to be remembered in all instances that Solano had the aboriginal cultural background of centuries behind him, hardly an orientation or veneer to be indented or lightly shoved aside by the brief exposure and introduction of the white man's culture and Christianity. Solano may have wanted to go to Monterey for no other reason than to gather money--the shells of the beach.¹⁵

Vallejo was a fairly independent man both in his relations with the central government as well as the church. At Sonoma Vallejo flatly refused to pay the tithe or to allow its collection in the district under his jurisdiction.¹⁶ He said that his business interests were not stable enough to warrant such a fixed sacrifice.

One December morning in 1839, Vallejo, with his family, was listening to the sermon of Father Quijas. This cleric censured the conduct of the authorities who had not permitted the collection of the tithe as ordered by the Bishop. It was quite obvious to everyone present that he was referring to General Vallejo. Solano realized what was going on. As soon as he left the church he approached Vallejo and asked him why he permitted so much insolence from the preacher. He said further that if Vallejo were going to permit the priest to insult him again, he would no longer remain in the service of a chief who did not know how to punish those who insulted him. Solano's comments so impressed Vallejo that he sent for the priest and told him that he did not like his choice of words. He said further that he did not think it was wise to discredit those in authority in front of the Indians. The priest replied that it was the word of God, and that he could preach nothing else. Vallejo sent the Father to his superior to tell him to send him a more tactful priest.

There was a mutiny in Sonoma in 1840. In all its dealings with California, Mexico was always slow to pay. The maintenance of a garrison at Sonoma, plus the armed Indians, amounted to a considerable sum. Many times the pay of the soldiers would be months behind. At this particular time in 1840, the men had gone months without money. There were murmurs of discontent. Sergeant Cayetano Juarez suggested to the men that they desert in a body and ride to Monterey for their money. This plan was being carried out late one night

when Solano heard the quiet preparation. Very quietly he went to Vallejo's door and roused him in time to intercept them. After remarking to them that they were leaving their women and children unprotected among savages, and that anyone who left would be shot as a deserter, the men dismounted.¹⁷

In April of 1840, Solano and the two Vallejos, Salvador and Mariano, were in the Suscol Valley stopping an invasion of the Tagualame, Ochehamne and Lachysma Indians. These three numerous and warlike tribes had been closing in on the Napa Valley under the command of the Indian chief, Narciso. The soldiers and the Suisuns took the invaders by surprise, defeated them and pursued them as far as the Jalpines where Narciso and twenty-one of his companions were taken prisoner.¹⁸

The year 1840 marks the end of the most active and influential period in both the careers of Solano and Vallejo. In the next decade the Mexican War destroyed Vallejo's unrivaled power on the northern frontier. As Vallejo's star began slowly to descend, so did Solano's, following closely in its wake.

NOTES

1. Cerruti claims it killed 200 whites, 3,000 mestizos and 100,000 wild Indians. Salvador Vallejo says it killed upwards of 60,000 Indians and it is the opinion of Alvarado that three-fifths of the Indian population perished. He places the actual number at 200,000 to 300,000. Fernandez puts the number at approximately 100,000. Although these estimates are unquestionably too high, there can be no doubt that the mortality ran into the thousands.

(P. 184-187. Reprinted from Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Vol. VII, No. 2, February, 1939: Smallpox in Spanish and Mexican California 1770-1845 by Sherburne Friend Cook)

2. An employee of General Vallejo at Sonoma, Julio Carrillo, has written "that if we had been able to save the lives of our Indians, and more especially those of the Suisuns, we would cheerfully have done it. They were our faithful servants and with their help we were able to till our immense fields and drive to new pastures our countless thousands of cattle and horses which in those days constituted the riches of the inhabitants of Upper California."

(Julio Carrillo, Narrative, as given by him to Robert A. Thompson, Editor of the Santa Rosa Democrat, 1875. In Sketches of California Pioneers, pp. 1-4. Now deposited as MS. in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.)

3. Chief Solano later identified "some men" simply as the Castros.

4. Pisco is a liquor similar to brandy. It was shipped from Callao in red earthen jars, each jar containing ten gallons.

5. The first printing press in California was brought to Monterey in 1834 by Zamorano. Vallejo had obtained possession of this press in 1837 and had brought it to Sonoma where it was used for several years.

6. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 329-338.

7. Interview with Rulofson.

8. The Bulletin (San Francisco, California), February 4, 1914 (Memoirs of the Vallejos based on original documents and the recollections of Dr. Platon M. G. Vallejo. Arranged for publication by James H. Wilkins.)

9. Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia has remarked that Solano was a friend first of himself, second of his people, and third of the Mexicans.

10. Vallejo, op. cit., pp. 42-45.

11. Isidora Solano blamed Sutter for these raids. She said that Sutter sold whiskey to the Mokelumnes and instigated the raids because he and Vallejo were enemies at this time. Isidora said that Solano did not like Sutter either because he sent the Mokelumnes on raids into Solano's domain. The Mokelumnes brought whiskey to trade. They were sharp traders and defrauded and stole every time they got the chance.

12. The Suisun and Tolenas grants combined have an area of 31,066 acres and comprise the larger share of the land politically called Suisun township.

13. "Fernandez remembers his passing through San Jose with hundreds (!) of Indians. He says Solano kept his men in very good order, but both he and Vallejo acted in a very proud, arrogant manner." (P. 598, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, Vol. 20)

Governor Alvarado has also remarked on the number of Indians in Solano's party. Like Vallejo, he tends to exaggerate in his statistics.

"When I, Alvarado, in the middle of 1836 visited Sonoma, I had an interview with Solano. He was pleased with the frank manner in which I greeted him and, cognizant of the friendship between me and his friend, Senor Vallejo, he told me that he thought I was a good white man and that he was giving me Napa Valley. I told him that I gave him the most sincere thanks and that I accepted the gift. And if some day it occurred to him to visit Monterey, he shouldn't fail to visit me. I would receive him joyfully in my house. Solano forgot my offer. It was somewhat lacking when he visited Monterey with the accompaniment of two or three thousand Indians. In a couple of weeks they had downed all the liquor that there was in Monterey, for the Indians, though for the most part industrious, are very prone to drunkenness. And as they lack the will power that is characteristic of the whites, when they begin to get drunk they don't stop until there is no shop or tavern that will trust them for liquor."

(P. 202-203, Vol. II, Juan Bautista Alvarado, Historia de California [5 Vols] 1876. Manuscript deposited in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California)

14. Dorotea Valdez, Reminiscences, taken by Henry Cerutti, Monterey, 1874. In Sketches of California Pioneers. Manuscript originally deposited in Bancroft's Public Library, San Francisco, California, now on deposit in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

15. There are references of other Indians making expeditions to Monterey to gather either seafood or shells, or both.

In August, 1789, some presidio buildings at Monterey were destroyed by fire. Governor Fages had to use his own ingenuity for the reconstruction work. There was only \$3,000

available, the three stonecutters and some sailors who had jumped ship. Fages, by negotiating with certain chiefs at San Jose, acquired a troop of between eighty and a hundred men. These men were conducted to Monterey by a corporal and four soldiers. Fages fed them well. Their pay was a string of beads, some cotton cloth and the privilege of collecting shells on the beach.

Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia has remarked that he has personally walked the Monterey and Carmel beaches and that the beach from Monterey to below Point Lobos is almost a continuous shell mound.

Adan E. Treganza has written about one of the activities of the central Miwok Indians with winter residence around Copperopolis and Vallecito (1850-1880): "If sometimes they had horses they would visit out in the valley and once I remember they went clear to Monterey to get sea shells. When they got back they were almost starved and my mother gave them some food and then they went up in the hills to trade their shells."

Arnold Pilling has written a brief dissertation in which he attempts to establish the situation of long range travel to secure food rather than money. "The initial suggestion was lent by the following statement of Alexander S. Taylor (March 23, 1860), concerning the Yokuts or Tulares at Monterey: In the month of May, 1859, the people of Monterey were surprised one day to see a large cavalcade coming into the town, who, to their surprise, turned out to be a company of Indians, from the Merced River and vicinity. They had numbered about fifty. Their expedition was after mussels and abalones. The Early Central California culture described by Heizer (1949) has as an important trait the use of abalones in the form of ornaments."

16. Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia has said that, for refusing to pay the tithe, Vallejo was threatened with excommunication.

17. The Bulletin (San Francisco, California), February 4, 1914. Memoirs of the Vallejos, op. cit.

18. Vallejo, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 125.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST OF THE INDIAN CAMPAIGNS

As Vallejo's first campaigns in Sonoma had been against the Satiyomis, so by chance his last campaign was against them. At the time Governor Micheltorena's letter came officially announcing his arrival at Monterey and requesting Vallejo to accept the position of jefe de la linea militar¹ from Sonoma to Santa Inez, Solano and Captain Salvador Vallejo were collecting provisions preparatory to an attack upon the Satiyomis who had assembled on Mark West Creek. Contradictory orders because of the capture of Monterey by Commodore Ap Catesby Jones of the United States Navy delayed preparations.

In the summer of 1841 the Indians of the Clear Lake region committed some depredations, and fifty or sixty soldiers under the command of Captain Salvador Vallejo and Solano were sent to punish them. Reaching the area, the expedition found the Indians in their temescales. As they came out of the steaming huts one or two at a time, they were shot or cut down until about one hundred and fifty men, women and children had been slaughtered. When the news of this massacre reached San Francisco, the people were horrified. The Indians deserved some punishment for their offenses, but no such punishment as was inflicted.

In the spring of 1841 Solano met Princess Helena de Gagarin in San Francisco. The Tsar of Russia had recently

sent Count Rotcheff to Fort Ross as its governor. He had brought his young and beautiful blonde wife with him. Solano was impressed by her and she by him. General Vallejo was infatuated with the princess too, to the extent that his wife chided him for his interest.

One morning in June the Count, his wife and a group of companions passed through Sonoma. They informed Vallejo that they were going to climb to the top of the mountain at the head of the Napa Valley--Mt. St. Helena. But Vallejo was suspicious of the Russian governor and of their activities at Fort Ross. It seemed wise to keep an eye on Rotcheff, so Vallejo sent his brother Salvador and Solano with a small detachment of soldiers and Indians to follow them. Apparently the company got ahead of the Russian party and were hiding when they passed. Without telling Salvador what he planned to do, Solano and his braves suddenly sprang up from behind the bushes. The Russians were startled for a moment and before they could do anything, Solano gave the signal to his warriors to wipe out the men in the party. Salvador immediately jumped to the foreground to prevent violence, but he could not talk Solano out of taking the princess. Salvador then told Solano that the General would be very displeased by his act and that he should wait for his final word. Solano agreed to this argument and the whole party waited for several hours while a soldier was sent to Sonoma to get Vallejo. As Vallejo returned on horseback to the scene of the attempted abduction, he worried about Solano's

blunder. He had seen enough barracks and warehouses at Fort Ross and Bodega to justify the Mexican government's anxiety about Russian plans for moving further into California. He had been sent to the northern frontier to prevent this very thing. And now Solano had captured the Russian princess-- a diplomatic blunder that the Tsar would never forgive. As soon as Vallejo arrived on the scene he ordered Solano to take his men and return to Sonoma at once. To his relief, Vallejo found that Helena was not too upset about the episode and that she could smile about the attention that Solano had forced upon her. Vallejo and his brother, Salvador, begged the honor of escorting the Russians back to Fort Ross.²

In 1837, Solano had petitioned for the Suisun Grant. In answer to this petition, Governor Alvarado, on January 21, 1842, granted him his desire--four leagues in the Suisun Valley. A copy of Governor Alvarado's order issuing the grant, follows, its date being January 21, 1842:

"(Seal) Juan B. Alvarado, Constitutional Governor of the Department of California.

Whereas, the aboriginal Francisco Solano, for his own personal benefit and that of his family, has asked for the land known by the name of Suisun, of which place he is a native, and chief of the tribes of the frontier of Sonoma, and being worthy of reward for the quietness which he caused to be maintained by that unchristianized people; the proper proceedings and examinations having previously been made as required by the laws and regulations, using the powers conferred on me in the name of the Mexican nation, I have granted to him the above mentioned land, adjudicating to him the ownership of it by these presents, being subject to the approbation of the most excellent Departmental Junta, and to the following conditions to wit:

1. That he may enclose it, without prejudice to the

crossings, roads, and servitudes, and enjoy it freely and exclusively, making such use and cultivation of it as he may see fit; but within one year he shall build a house and it shall be inhabited.

2. He shall ask the magistrate of the place to give him judicial possession of it, in virtue of this order, by whom the boundaries shall be marked out; and he shall place in them, besides the landmarks, some fruit or forest trees of some utility.

3. The land herein mentioned is to the extent of four square leagues with limits, as shown on the map, accompanying the respective expediente. The magistrate who gives the possession will have it measured according to ordinance, leaving the excess that may result, to the nation for its convenient uses.

4. If he contravenes these conditions he shall lose his right to the land and it may be denounced by another. In consequence I order that these presents be held firm and valid; that a register be taken of it in the proper book, and that it be given to the party interested, for his voucher and other purposes.

Given this 21st day of January, 1842, at Monterey.

(Signed) Juan B. Alvarado
Manuel Jimeno, Secretary."

At the same time that Alvarado notified Solano of his ownership of the Suisun Grant, a favorable report was also submitted to the departmental assembly by the Committee on Vacant Land. The following order, a copy of which was given to Solano, was issued on October 3, 1845:

"In session of this day, the proposition of the foregoing report was approved by the most excellent departmental assembly, ordering the expediente to be returned to His Excellency, the Governor, for suitable purposes.

(Signed) Pió Pico, President
Augustin Olona, Secretary."

However Solano had already sold his land. Within four

months of Alvarado's order in 1842, Solano sold the Suisun Grant to General Vallejo for one thousand Mexican silver dollars, which was a fair rate consistent with the land values of the time. Solano had a reason for selling his grant. His Indians had been destroyed by smallpox, and since he held a high position at Sonoma, he had no need for the land.³

By the beginning of November, 1842, alarming rumors became current that strangers were trying to stir up trouble between the Suisuns and the Cainameros. These rumors also motivated the recruiting of a larger force among the settlers and Indians with the ostensible object of inflicting a serious defeat upon the Satiyomis, who were supposed to be aiding these mysterious strangers. The recruits were being trained at Huichica at the time of Commodore Jones' visit to Sonoma. After his premature and ill-advised seizure of Monterey, Jones went to San Francisco. While there he sent a message to Vallejo requesting permission to visit him at Sonoma. Vallejo granted the permission and sent him instructions and a map as to how to reach Sonoma. Vallejo was alarmed at what Jones had done at Monterey. He called in Salvador and Solano, who were in charge of the training at Huichica, and ordered all military commanders in northern California to assemble their forces in San Francisco.⁴ Both Solano and Salvador apparently were aware of the situation and the importance of Jones.

The Jones party missed the Sonoma Creek, purposely or

otherwise, and showed up in restricted territory at Huichica in the maddles of the training camp.⁵ They were captured by Lieutenant Ramon Carrillo who took them to the Indian encampment at Huichica ranch. Salvador and Solano took Jones and his party to Sonoma and locked them up. About midnight General Vallejo was notified that Jones and his men were lodged in jail. He released them immediately and prepared a midnight meal for them. Secretly, he must have been delighted to think that foreign officers had so soon discovered it unsafe to wander at will on his frontier. The next day Vallejo took Jones to visit Huichica officially, where a celebration was held for him. During the course of the day, Vallejo probably found opportunity to apologize for Solano.⁶ Jones and Vallejo were friendly and spent several days together.

In the spring of 1843 Captain Salvador Vallejo and Solano were fighting the Satiyomis in Mendocino County, where they had joined the Indians of the region around Mendocino Bay. The campaign was not particularly successful. The Sonoma troops appeared in the region about the first of March with a force of seventy cavalrymen and two hundred Indian auxiliaries. Their enemies took refuge on two small, insignificant islands off the coast. Tule rafts were constructed and on the 12th an attack was made at about eight o'clock in the evening. The Indian losses were very heavy on both sides. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the Californians were able to retreat to the mainland in the dark. The troops held their position on the main-

land a little farther to the south in spite of a number of attacks from the Yubaqueos, until the 27th, when they were obliged to retreat from lack of supplies. The retreat had much the character of a flight after an Indian siege of their mountain camp had nearly reduced them to starvation.

A rumor that Governor Micheltorena intended to relieve Vallejo of his command prevented a renewal of the campaign. Nothing of any great significance occurred for the balance of the year.

In 1844 an unusual incident again focused attention on Solano when Dr. Edward Turner Bale attempted to assassinate Salvador Vallejo in the streets of Sonoma. He was married to Salvador's niece and lived with the Salvador Vallejo family. For some reason Bale spread rumors about Salvador to the effect that he was a liar. Salvador had him publicly flogged, whereupon Bale left Sonoma. Several weeks later he attacked Salvador and his secretary from behind. He had ridden into town with fourteen armed Americans intending to kill Salvador. Bale fired two shots--one grazed Salvador's cheek and the other wounded his secretary. The crowd interfered and Bale and his men ran to the home of Jacob P. Leese for protection. When Solano heard of the attempted murder he assembled some fifty Indians and demanded the criminal. He was either sincerely fond of Salvador or sincerely fond of fighting, and he took every provocation as an opportunity to do so--to fight and/or show his regard for the Vallejos. Solano broke down

the door of the Leese home and, tying Bale hand and foot, started dragging him to an oak tree in the plaza to hang him. General Vallejo stopped the hanging and had Bale turned over to him. He was tried and found guilty and freed. Bale was a British subject, and since the British had several warships on the coast and were looking for an incident, the Spanish made sure that this was not one. Bale apologized to Salvador and throwing their arms around each other, they vowed eternal friendship.

NOTES

1. Jefe de la linea militar would be translated literally, chief of the military line.

2. Most of the accounts of Solano and the Russian princess are essentially the same. Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez has expressed the opinion that the princess, rather than not being too upset about her capture, was, like the coquette that she probably was, enchanted with the adventure.

Harry D. Hubbard has expressed the opinion that the princess was more than enchanted, that she was practically on the verge of capitulation. He remarks further that Helena insisted on Solano conducting the whole party to his tribe's camp and explaining to her every phase of tribal life. She had heard these people referred to as "Digger" Indians and she wanted to know how the name originated.

Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia has said that if Solano had had his way he would have shot the Russian men and taken Helena for himself as a squaw. And there the romance would have ended, for Solano had at one time or another as many as eleven wives. Platon Vallejo has written that his father, Mariano, found the Suisuns unusually faithful in their marital relations, whereas Stephen Powers has written that among the Wintuns the marriage relation was extremely loose and easily sundered. Being mountaineers, the Trinity Wintuns were less sensual and adulterous than the tribes on the Sacramento, and were more faithful in marriage.

3. Mary Jean Davis of Berkeley has written that after a few years Solano was forced to sell his grant for fifty dollars to accommodate the selfish wishes of the white man.

The Vallejo Times-Herald has recorded that when Solano obtained a government land grant for his people, the white men cheated him out of it. It was General Vallejo who advised Solano to petition for a government land grant. But Solano's property proved to be too big a lure for the white men. After he had held the land grant for a few years, Solano was tricked out of it by unscrupulous whites for a sum of about fifty dollars. The buyers got nearly half a county for their purchase price. After he had sold his tribe's property, Solano remained in Rockville, living in an adobe house which later became a stage depot.

Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia mentions Vallejo by name as the purchaser of Solano's Suisun Grant. However, he defends him and believes that Vallejo was fair and square in his dealings with Solano. But not so Mary Jean Davis and the Vallejo Times-Herald. They refuse to mention Vallejo by name as the purchaser of Solano's land. If they have him in mind they certainly imply that he was a crook and a scoundrel, as well as unscrupulous in his dealings with his purported friend and ally, Solano.

After the many instances of Solano's allegiance, loyalty and faithful service to Vallejo, it hardly seems possible that any man could repay such loyalty with the type of treachery implied by Mary Jean Davis and the Vallejo Times-Herald.

4. Nothing came of Vallejo's order of assembly as there is no record of their meeting in San Francisco.

5. Jones was supposed to ascend Sonoma Creek to Sonoma, but went further east and ascended Huichica Creek. Since Jones was an excellent navigator, it is hard to believe that he did not know where he was going.

6. Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia believes that it is probable that Vallejo encouraged Solano to apprehend people in the wilderness. Vallejo liked to show his authority and power. Solano was the iron hand and the physical expression of this urge. It was then easy for Vallejo to apologize for the incident created by Solano. This type of incident occurred numerous times and makes the possibility of coincidence seem unlikely.

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSING OF SOLANO

Solano's career ended with the Bear Flag Revolt in 1846. On the morning of June 16, 1846, a company of thirty-three Americans from Sutter's Fort, Napa and Sonoma valleys, marched into the town of Sonoma about daybreak, captured the garrison and took General Vallejo prisoner. These proceedings constituted the beginning of the Bear Flag movement, which culminated in the cession of California Territory to the United States. Dr. Robert Semple was deputized to convey some of the prisoners (among whom were General Vallejo and his brother Salvador) to Sutter's Fort. Strangely enough, the Indians had almost nothing to do during the Bear Flag Revolt. The influx of settlers into the region north of San Francisco during the last few years of Mexican control did much to minimize their importance as a menace.

The Indians did, however, furnish the excuse out of which grew the attack upon Sonoma. It was reported that the Indians of this district were uniting against the foreign settlers. There is no evidence that this report had even a shadow of truth, but it was sufficient to alarm the American "squatters" and cause them to take refuge with General John C. Fremont, appealing to him to protect their interests. Fremont was willing to give his aid unofficially and a number of raids on Indian villages occurred. It is difficult to explain the general silence about Solano

and the Suisuns during all this time. It is thought that the time of year required them to be absent from Sonoma in search of pasturage for their stock. (It is to be remembered that Solano had a very real talent for suddenly springing up in the most unexpected places and interrupting the progress of intruders. It was no mere accident that he fell down on the job this particular time.)

The suddenness and unexpectedness of the Bear Flaggers' attack found Vallejo completely unprepared. And this in a period of continual apprehension that a foreign invasion might occur at any time. The garrison had been, for the most part, dispersed after Governor Micheltorena's arrival at Monterey, and Vallejo's growing discouragement in his hopes of receiving any assistance with his schemes for the protection of the country. The inactivity of the friendly Indians is perhaps the best argument for the charge that Vallejo was willing to be rendered ineffectual in a series of events where his desires and his duty conflicted. Vallejo had had numerous conferences with Thomas Oliver Larkin, United States Consul at Monterey, and other Americans who favored pursuing a policy that would result in the annexation of California by the United States in a legal and orderly manner.

This idea stood in contrast to the somewhat violent character of the Bear Flag Revolt as inspired by Fremont. However, Vallejo, gambling on the long run of inevitable annexation by the United States, may have counseled a policy

of non-resistance to the Americans. This course of action is indicated when Vallejo refused to permit his fellow Mexicans to effect his rescue while enroute to Sacramento in custody of the Bear Flag men. Some of the Mexicans crept into camp at night and told Vallejo that they had the men and arms with which to rescue him. Vallejo said that he did not want to be rescued. Vallejo, knowing of Solano's habit of precipitate and impulsive action, must have well counseled Solano in advance of his part in the advent of any actions involving Americans. He may have told him that he was not to resist them and to remain perfectly neutral. At Sacramento, Fremont put Vallejo in jail for two months. While he was interned at Sutter's Fort, the rumor got out that he was dead.¹

Solano probably would have remained in the vicinity of Sonoma as long as he knew that Vallejo was alive. However, believing that Vallejo was dead, he decided to leave so as to escape the same fate as that of Vallejo. He decided to go north rather than east or south, to get far away from the Americans. From 1846 to 1858² he drifted from tribe to tribe looking for a tribe with which to live and become a chief. He said that he never found a tribe which suited him, and consequently he kept drifting. The route he followed took him into contact with Indians of Penutian origin.³

In 1858 he returned to Sonoma and offered his services to Vallejo in a military capacity. He said he had come back because he wanted to see his native soil again. More likely

he had heard that Vallejo was alive and that if he returned, his old position and prestige would again be offered to him. He remained at Sonoma for several days, and then left to visit some Suisuns near the old Yulyul encampment. While on this visit he contracted pneumonia and died there.⁴

It was Solano's fate to live in a transitional environment in which his race was forced into the subordinate role. The fact that he was able to maintain his pride, his integrity, his self-identification in the face of an overpowering culture and civilization, is a monument to the strength of his body and the power of his mind. The maintenance of his people in a peaceful relationship with the invaders, was a tribute to his diplomacy.

Solano was buried about a hundred yards or so due east of an old buckeye tree, situated across from the Samuel Martin ranch on the old Highway 40, between Rockville and Cordelia.⁵ According to the burial practices of his tribe and nation, Solano was doubled up and wrapped with grass-ropes, skins, mats, and strings of shell-money until he looked like a huge ball. All of his earthly possessions were cast into the grave with him. Squaws with tarred faces danced on his newly-rounded grave. His name was never again mentioned by the few remaining members of his tribe. They believed that he had gone to the sky, that he had ascended to the Happy Western Land.⁶

Mr. Percy Neitzel of Cordelia, a long-time rancher of the area, has remarked that the local residents are pretty

sentimental about Solano and the old buckeye tree. The following two quotations give a fair example of the intensity of this sentiment:

"The center of a proposed new right-of-way for the State Highway between Rockville and Cordelia bisected a giant buckeye tree that marks the final resting place of Chief Solano. Rather than permit progress to disturb the remains of the valiant chief, B. B. Meek, State Director of Public Works, issued an order that the highway shall be routed around the tree."⁷

"The bones of old Chief Solano won't be disturbed if Sam Martin, prominent Rockville rancher, has anything to say about it. He says that neither will the small embankment in front of his stone house be changed to conform with the proposed widening of the Cordelia-Rockville road. Martin has parked two old trucks in the highway department's path, and he has engaged an attorney to protect his rights--and to protect the nearby grave of Solano. The county road department found this out this week when they began to widen the shoulders of the road. Martin's property rights adjacent to the road date back to 1862. Martin says he has reason to believe that the remains of Chief Solano lie under a buckeye tree near his residence. He contends that the widening of the road may pass over or disturb the last remains of the famous chief. Meanwhile in order to prevent complications, County Engineer Jones is keeping his equipment away from the stony slopes and the possible burial ground."⁸

The ultimate disposition of Solano's land, the Suisun Grant, is interesting. In some of the litigation there were aspersions and insinuations that entertain the possibility that Vallejo allied himself with Solano from the start to eventually get possession of his land. This land was purchased from Solano by Mariano Vallejo, and still later was acquired, also by purchase, by Archibald A. Ritchie, who received a United States patent for 17,754 acres in January, 1857.⁹ Prior to receiving the patent in 1857,

Ritchie had some trouble with the United States Government three years before, in 1854, over who had legal ownership of the Suisun Grant. His claim to Solano's four square leagues of land appeared in the Supreme Court of the United States, December term, 1854. Ritchie claimed:

- "1. By a grant, dated January 28, 1842, from Juan B. Alvarado, Mexican Governor for the department of the Californias, to Francisco Solano, an Indian, in consideration of services he had rendered on the frontier of Sonoma.
2. A confirmation of Alvarado's grant to Solano on October 3rd, 1845, by the departmental assembly for the department of California.
3. On May 10th, 1845, Francisco Solano conveyed the lands to Mariano G. Vallejo, for the consideration of one thousand hard Mexican dollars.
4. That on August 26th, 1850, Mariano G. Vallejo and his wife, for the expressed consideration of \$10,000 paid down, and \$40,000 secured, conveyed to the said Archibald A. Ritchie the premises in question by a deed.
5. Solano appears to have petitioned for the land in question as early as January 16th, 1837, and a temporary grant was made to him by M. G. Vallejo on the 18th of that month. It is therefore and now contended, in behalf of the United States, that M. G. Vallejo had no title to convey by reason of the fact that Solano had no power to convey. The question here is whether the deed of Solano to M. G. Vallejo, executed under the Mexican law, is good according to that law. For conveyances by Indians, by our law, must be made under the protecting authority of some person designated for the safeguard of the Indian. Executory contracts, made and entered into by any Indian, shall be deemed and held null and void. The only pretense of title in Vallejo was that he derived from Solano, by virtue of his supposed conveyance of May 10, 1842. At that time Solano had no title to transfer. If nothing further had been done in relation to the title, no one would pretend that this tract was severed from the public domain; and, if not, it passed under the treaty with Mexico, to the United States. But it is contended, that in October, 1845, Solano's title was

confirmed by the departmental assembly, and that such confirmation inured to the benefit of Vallejo as his grantee. This cannot be so, for the following reasons:

- A. The purchase of Solano was not authorized by law.
- B. Solano had no authority to make a valid covenant in relation to the land, or title thereto.

With further investigation we find that Vallejo was commandant of Sonoma, and that Solano was a dependent of his--styled in the testimony his majordomo, that is, bailiff or overseer; and his name was used as a cover to the illegal transaction. In 1837, Vallejo professes to have granted this property to Solano temporarily. In 1842, another Vallejo, probably a brother or son of Mariano Vallejo, obtains a concession, in Solano's name, for the premises and tells Solano where his boundaries are. After these most unusual acts of the Vallejos, Solano, it is claimed, made a deed to his commanding officer and master, M. G. Vallejo, of this whole valuable property, in May, 1842.

Solano resided with Vallejo as a dependent, or servant, probably most of the time until his death. It is obvious that all these operations were, in fact, for Vallejo's benefit. Instead of being the owner of this vast domain, Solano becomes the humble hanger-on of the officer of the government who raises a fortune by the use of his name. There is but one possible hypothesis to explain this, and it is that the whole transaction was a contrivance of M. G. Vallejo in the name of his dependent, Solano, and through the agency of the members of his family, sons or brothers to obtain a title in fraud of the laws of his country, and so null and void.

The Mission of San Francisco Solano was founded August 25th, 1823, by the Reverend Father Amoros. It was this Mission, the main building of which Vallejo took possession in violation of law and destroyed; while he employed as domestics, such of the Indians as remained, including Francisco Solano, if there was any person of that name; for when the witnesses testify that Francisco Solano had been in possession of Suisun for so many years, do they mean Francisco Solano the saint or Francisco Solano the savage? Is not the latter a mere myth?

The rancho of Suisun was one of these appendages of the Mission of San Francisco Solano. Solano was doubtless a neophyte of the Mission of San

Francisco Solano. He may have been overseer of this ranch for the Mission, as he afterwards was for Vallejo. Alvarado and Vallejo were conspirators, and Solano was the servant and the tool of Vallejo in giving to him the false pretenses of possession and title at Suisun.

Concluding remarks of the Brief for the United States:

1. No title passed from the government to Solano, the whole transaction being a fraud, of which Solano was the instrument, for the benefit of Vallejo.
2. The pretended title of Vallejo, through Solano, was only a fraudulent device to cover the plunder, by him, of a part of the mission lands of San Francisco Solano.
3. Of course, Vallejo, having no title, could convey none to Ritchie, and the land appertains to the public domain of the United States."¹⁰

Public interest in Chief Solano faded out until 1931, when the legislators of Solano County decided to erect a monument to him near Cordelia, on the main state highway between Oakland and Sacramento. The bill of Senator Thomas McCormack of Rio Vista to appropriate \$5,000 for this purpose received the Senate's approval. However, Senator W. P. Rich of Marysville opposed the measure, pointing out that it would pave the way to a multitude of Indian statues studding California's landscape with cigar store Indians. The Senate gave McCormack the money for Solano's statue, a sum the Senator claimed would be matched by the Improved Order of Red Men of Suisun.¹¹ A bill to repeal the act of 1931 appropriating \$5,000 for Solano's memorial was defeated by the Assembly in 1933. Ernest C. Crowley of Suisun said that a Berkeley sculptor had the plans prepared for the monument.¹²

In 1933 the Bush fact-finding committee ambushed the

bill and brought in another to return the appropriation to the general fund. Senator Herbert W. Slater of Sonoma County came to the aid of McCormack and Crowley and they were able to push the appropriation through. The fact-finders were defeated and the Massasoit Tribe of Red Men of Fairfield purchased the site for the statue.¹³ In June, 1934, the statue was dedicated to Chief Solano.

"Solano will be honored Sunday by the county that bears his name, when ceremonies are held at Fairfield to dedicate his monument. The outdoor dedication is to be held at 2:00 P.M. Sunday afternoon four miles west of Fairfield, on the site believed to be Solano's burial place. The Indian hero acted as mediator and peace maker between Indians and white men during the 1840's, when the North Bay region threatened to become a battle ground of race supremacy."¹⁴

Mrs. Louise Vallejo Emparan of Sonoma, daughter of General Vallejo, attended the unveiling of the monument to Solano on June 3, 1934. Mrs. Emparan said that Solano was a great friend of her father. He was known as the "King of Indians," and his kingdom included Solano, Napa and Yolo counties.¹⁵ However, this was not the end of the Solano story. The statue immediately became the target of youthful hunters. The feathers were shot off the head. There were numerous other marks on the statue caused by thrown stones and rifle shots. As a result of a drive by the Red Men of California and the Fairfield Lions Club, a bill was passed in 1938 in the State Assembly permitting the removal of the statue from its rural site to its present location in the angle of the County Library in Fairfield.¹⁶ On August 1, 1949, Governor Earl Warren signed a bill by State

Senator Luther Gibson of Solano County to clear the title of land formerly occupied by the statue.

In 1955 the members of the Solano County Fair Association thought that Solano could add a major attraction to their advertising efforts. But the supervisors of the county, as well as Sam Martin and other long-time residents of the area, have no intention of reducing the chief to a prop in an advertising campaign. Consequently Solano's statue remained on the front lawn of the County Library in Fairfield. Edwin Pierce, Association president, had requested that the statue's final resting place be at the Solano County Fair site. Pierce said that the Association had adopted as its theme the significance of Chief Solano. Letterheads had been printed with a replica of the chief reproduced thereon. The Fair committee had planned to use the chief as part of their advertising material and establish him as their trademark among the county fairs of California as a permanent type of insignia.

As the final word in the story of one departed, it is both traditional and fitting, at least from the white man's point of view, to quote his epitaph, which was written by General Vallejo:

"To the bravery and in particular to the diplomacy of that great Chieftain of the Suisun Indians, civilization is indebted for the conquest of the territory which today comprises the counties of Solano, Napa, Sonoma, and Lake."

The End

NOTES

1. Rodney Martin Rulofson of Cordelia has remarked that he has seen a letter in which Vallejo denied the rumor of his death, which proves that there was such a rumor.

2. Chief Solano came to the rescue of a '49er with a sick baby when his fellow Indians ran away in fright. When Samuel Martin and his family were traveling into Green Valley in 1849, their year-old son, Henry, suffered a sudden convulsion. (It is this same Henry Martin who in 1895 claimed that Solano was buried under the buckeye tree across the road from his ranch.) Appealing to the Indians for aid, they were dismayed to see them scatter in fright--with the exception of Solano, who quickly produced hot water and helped to revive the child. As a result, Solano and Samuel Martin became fast friends and the Indian chief prevailed upon long-forgotten owners of the present Martin ranch to sell three hundred and forty acres to his new found white friend. As Martin engaged in his first ranching operations, Solano continued to live on the property.

3. Platon Vallejo, son of General Vallejo, has written that Solano wandered northward through Oregon and Washington, deep into the British possessions. He may have traveled into Alaska, for he spoke of a land where it was sometimes light, sometimes dark, all day.

4. One author believes that Solano died in 1849, and in 1850 most of his tribe migrated to Napa, carrying with them their little hoards of grain.

Marguerite Hunt and Harry Lawrence Gunn have written that Solano died about the time that the white settlers first entered Suisun Valley.

Aubrey Drury records that Solano lived in an adobe in Yulyul Canyon, and died in 1850.

Hubert Howe Bancroft relates that "I have no record showing the date of Solano's death." (P. 727, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. 22)

Eileen Minahan of Fairfield has remarked that there is a story that it was shortly after his return to the Suisun-Fairfield area that Chief Solano died.

Mary Jean Davis of Berkeley states that Solano's death is shrouded in mystery.

Myrtle M. McKittrick has written that Solano died in 1855.

The Vallejo Times-Herald has recorded that Solano died in 1850.

5. General Vallejo probably knew where Solano was buried, but he would never divulge the secret. He never again referred to Solano by name, but always as the great chief of the Suisuns. This was a deference to Indian custom.

After interviewing a Pomo Indian, Rodney Martin Rulof-

son of Cordelia believes that Solano's grave may not be near Rockville at all. The Pomo told Rulofson that Solano was secretly buried and that his grave was violated within twenty-four hours after his burial by the Pomos, and his remains scattered. The motivation of the Pomos for this desecration was revenge and hatred, since they were Solano's enemies. Rulofson qualifies his remarks by saying that this was probably wishful thinking on the part of the Pomo narrator. It was the custom of the Indians to bury their chiefs secretly.

Eileen Minahan of Fairfield relates that Solano was buried near Rockville. Some people believe that the buckeye tree across from the Samuel Martin home on the road to Cordelia, marks his grave. The old buckeye tree is growing on the shoulder of the road, which has been reinforced and blocked up with stones, in order to preserve the road and also the sanctity of the tree.

Eileen Minahan believes that there is some evidence to indicate that the chief died near Petaluma and was buried on an island in Petaluma Creek with great honors by his fellow-chieftain, Comino Ynito. Located there is a large mound, fifty feet high, which, according to Indian tradition, was the burial place of the chiefs.

Lois Ann Woodward has written that Solano was buried on a little island in Petaluma Creek. The burial took place under the direction of Chief Camilo with all the honors and ceremony due to the last great chief of the Suisuns.

The Sacramento Daily Union has recorded that a little below Lakeville, in front of the Dr. Burdell residence, near the western side of the marsh, there is a large mound rising up from the marsh some fifty feet high. According to Indian tradition that mound has been celebrated for centuries as the burial place of Indian chiefs. General Vallejo once informed Dr. Burdell that the great chief of the Suisuns was buried there, with the pomp and circumstance of an immense funeral train of Indians.

Arnold Pilling, a University of California archaeologist, surveyed Burdell's Island in Petaluma Creek in 1949. He remarked that similar small islands in slough regions had previously proved likely spots for Indian occupation. There was no tie-up with Solano at this time. After the survey, Burdell's Island showed no indications of any Indian occupation. The California Indians traditionally buried their chiefs in much the same circumstances as their people. It was standard practice to bury their dead within the village area in which the group was resident at the time of the individual's death. The Suisuns regarded Sonoma or Napa as sacred. However, it is extremely unlikely that they would take their chief there for burial. The California Indians would not transport deceased bodies any considerable distance for burial.

6. Edward S. Curtis has written that the Patwin (a subdivision of the Wintun) dead were sometimes cremated.

Alfred Louis Kroeber believes that the dead of the River Patwin were buried. Only people killed at a distance

were cremated. The mortuary customs of both the Southwestern Wintun and Pomo favored cremation but omitted the celebration of a mourning anniversary.

7. The Director of Public Works in Sacramento was written for a copy of this order. In his reply of December 7, 1955, he explained that ".....after a thorough search of the records of this office, we are unable to locate a copy of the order."

8. Oakland Tribune, October 9, 1952.

9. Hoover and H. E. and E. G. Rensch, Historic Spots in California, new ed. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1948), p. 362.

10. Supreme Court of the U.S., Dec. term, 1854, No. 44. The U.S., Appellant, ADS. Archibald A. Ritchie; Brief for the U.S., C. Cushing, Attorney General.

11. Leo C. Dunnell, prominent Fairfield attorney, remarked that when Governor Rolph heard about the appropriation he said: "\$5,000 for a damn statue of an Indian that's been dead for eighty years, and I can't even get \$1,000 for an airplane!"

12. The sculptor referred to by Mr. Crowley was William Gordon Huff of Berkeley. The California Park Board awarded the commission to Mr. Huff. The statue of Chief Solano was to be cast in bronze, twelve feet high.

13. The Sacramento Bee, February 17, 1934.

14. San Francisco Examiner, May 31, 1934.

15. San Francisco Chronicle, May 29, 1934.

16. Vallejo Times-Herald, October 10, 1947.

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